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**Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance:
An Anthology of Hymns by the Satpanth Ismā'īlī Saint,
Pīr Shams**

Tazim Rahim Kassam

**A doctoral thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the area of
*History of Religions***

**Faculty of Religious Studies
McGill University
Montreal, Canada**

October 1992

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ISBN 0-315-87538-0

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SHORTENED TITLE OF Ph.D. DISSERTATION:

Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Ismā'īlī, Pīr Shams

Tazim Rahim Kassam
Faculty of Religious Studies
McGill University

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DEDICATION

*To my dear parents
Laila and Rafim*

*Verily you should worship none save Him
and show kindness unto thy parents.
Whether one or both attain old age,
say not harsh words to them but speak to them tenderly
and serve them generously and with humility.
And say
"O Sustainer! Bestow thy Grace upon them,
even as they cherished and cared for me as a child."
Surah al-Isra Verse 22*

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ABSTRACT

Author: Tazim Rahim Kassam

Thesis Title: **Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: An Anthology of Hymns by the Satpanth Ismā'īlī Saint, Pīr Shams**

Department: Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University

Degree: **Ph.D.**

This dissertation offers for the first time an extensive scholarly translation of an anthology of 106 *gināns* (sacred hymns) attributed to the Ismā'īlī saint-composer, Pīr Shams. The *Ginān* tradition is a sacred corpus of devotional poetry belonging to a sub-sect of the Shī'ah Muslims known as the Satpanth Ismā'īlī Khojahs. Composed in various North Indian dialects, *gināns* are part of a broader rich and complex heritage of Indo-Muslim folk literatures in the Indian subcontinent. For centuries, however, the Satpanth Ismā'īlīs have carefully guarded this sacred tradition for fear of persecution. By thus presenting a major translation of *gināns* attributed to a pivotal figure in Satpanth Ismā'īlism, this dissertation aspires to advance significantly the academic study and knowledge of this scarcely examined sacred literature.

To date, the syncretic nature of Satpanth Ismā'īlism has been viewed within a framework of conversion. Thus, generally, the *ginān* literature has been explained as the creative attempts of Ismā'īlī *pīrs* (venerated teachers) to effect changes in religious orientation by conveying Nizārī Ismā'īlī teachings through Hindu symbols and themes. However, an examination of the internal evidence in the *gināns* of Pīr Shams—who belonged to the beginnings of Satpanth—in conjunction with events in Sind and the greater Ismā'īlī world at the time, has brought into focus crucial social and political factors that may also have instigated the formation of Satpanth Ismā'īlism.



RÉSUMÉ

Auteur: Tazim Rahim Kassam

Titre de thèse: **Chants de sagesse et Cercles de danse: une Anthologie d'Hymnes par le Saint Satpanth Ismā'īlī, Pīr Shams**

Département: Faculté des Études Religieuses, Université McGill

Diplôme: Doctorat

La présente thèse fournit, pour la première fois, une traduction savante étendue d'une anthologie de 106 *gināns* (hymnes sacrés) que l'on attribue au saint et compositeur Ismā'īlī, Pīr Shams. Recueil sacré de poésie de dévotion, la tradition des *Gināns* appartient à la sous-secte des Musulmans Shī'āh connus comme les Khojahs Satpanth Ismā'īlīs. Composés en divers dialectes du nord de l'Inde, les *gināns* font partie d'un vaste héritage riche et complexe de littérature Indo-Musulmane populaire dans le sous-continent Indien. Pendant des siècles, cependant, les Ismā'īlīs Satpanth ont soigneusement protégé cette tradition sacrée par peur de persécution. Dès lors, par la présentation d'une ample traduction des *gināns* attribués à une figure centrale de l'Ismā'īlisme Satpanth, cet ouvrage cherche à faire progresser considérablement l'étude et les connaissances académiques de cette littérature sacrée à peine étudiée.

Jusqu'ici, la nature syncrétique de l'Ismā'īlisme Satpanth a été considérée dans le cadre de la conversion. Par conséquent, on a généralement expliqué la littérature des *gināns* comme les tentatives créatrices des *pīrs* Ismā'īlīs (enseignants vénérés) dans le but d'apporter des changements d'orientation religieuse par le biais d'enseignements Ismā'īlīs Nizārīs à travers des symboles et des thèmes hiéroglyphiques. Toutefois, l'étude des témoignages propres aux *gināns* de Pīr Shams—qui appartenait aux débuts du Satpanth—de pair avec les événements dans le Sind et l'ensemble du monde Ismā'īlī à l'époque, jette la lumière sur des facteurs sociaux et politiques déterminants qui auraient également été à l'origine de la formation de l'Ismā'īlisme Satpanth.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to express my profound gratitude to Prof. Katherine Young. An exacting mentor, a generous benefactor, and an extraordinary person, Prof. Young has been a constant inspiration to me and will remain ever so. It was she who through her own passionate and disciplined engagement in her specialty drew me into the study of the History of Religions; and it was she who then conscientiously and selflessly directed and advanced my academic training. True to the traditional Indian *guru-śiṣya paramparā*, Prof. Young has taught by example and has by far exceeded the duties of thesis supervisor. Were it not for her probing questions, her stimulating discussions, her patient and tireless assistance over the years, this thesis could not have been written. For all this and for much more, I shall remain ever indebted to Prof. Young.

I would like also to express how deeply grateful I am to my thesis co-advisor, Prof. Charles Adams, whose lucidity, eloquence, and compassion in scholarship stand as an ideal. To bring to the study of Islam both the sophisticated precision of the Islamicist and the imaginative breadth of the Historian of Religions is no easy task. Prof. Adams not only accomplishes this with poise, but has infinitely enriched those of us who have heard his minted expositions and carefully drawn insights on Islamic topics and the study of Religions. To have known his teaching and counsel is a privilege, and one that is held with awe and sincere appreciation.

I am also deeply indebted to the faculty and staff of the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University for the uniquely stimulating and charitable environment that they have created for students of religion. Both former and present deans, Prof. Joseph McLelland and Prof. Donna Runnalls, have given timely help and support over the years. My thanks are also due to Prof. Robert Culley and Prof. Arvind Sharma for their help during the early stages of this thesis. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Prof. Robert Stevenson who was instrumental in getting me to India to study languages and to train in Indian Classical Vocal Music, and who was unfailing in his support in moments of crises. For his aid and affection, I am truly grateful.



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Over the course of my research, I benefited from the assistance of many individuals. In particular, I am deeply indebted to Mr. Chotubhai Lakhani and Prof. Bhupendra Trivedi of Bombay, for the many hours they spent with me discussing the language and content of the *gināns* of Pīr Shānis. I also want to acknowledge the professional musician, Dr. Prabha Atre, who initiated me into the complexities of Indian classical music and vocal performance. Thanks are due to Mr. Adam Gacek and Mrs. Zawahir Moir, both formerly at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, for sharing their insights with me on the study of Arabic and Khojki manuscripts. I would also like to acknowledge Prof. Paul Walker, whose probing seminars on Shī'ah Thought and Islamic Sectarianism at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, significantly advanced my comprehension of Shī'ism.

My doctoral studies have been made possible by the financial assistance, at various times, of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Institute of Ismaili Studies and the Social Science Research Council. I also received Teaching Assistantships from the Faculty of Religious Studies for four years. For this assistance, may I express my sincere thanks.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my sister and colleague, Zayn Kassam-Hann, for painstakingly editing this thesis. This is but one among uncountable gestures of moral support and intellectual sustenance that Zayn has given me over the years. I would also like to thank my family for love, faith and encouragement. This includes my precious music guru, Prabha Atre and my well-wisher, Vijay Nerurkar, both of Bombay; and my dear friend, Fatima Hirji.

To my beloved parents, Laila and Rahim, I owe a debt of love, honour and gratitude too profound to tell with words. It is to them that this work is dedicated.

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NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration scheme used in this thesis for Arabic and Persian terms is that of the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS), McGill University. For Sanskrit, Hindi and Gujarati, I have followed the transliteration scheme given for Sanskrit in Micheal Coulson's **Sanskrit: An Introduction to the Classical Language** (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976). These two transliteration systems do not always coincide in their assignment of symbols for specific phonetic values. For instance, the Nāgarī letter श and the Arabic ش are similarly pronounced as 'sh' in 'sheet', but the first is transliterated 'ś' by Coulson and the second 'sh' by the IIS system. Whereas the IIS system uses 'ch' to represent the Arabic letter ح as in 'chant', the Nāgarī letter च for the same consonant is transliterated 'c' by Coulson who retains 'ch' for the Nāgarī aspirate छ. It may be possible to develop a consistent transliteration system that would uniformly represent phonetically similar or identical letters in the Arabic and Sanskrit alphabets, but this would be at the cost of interfering with the the integrity of rather long established transliteration systems for each of these two language groups. Instead of upsetting these conventions, I have opted to accommodate both transliteration systems. Thus, rather than write the Ar./Per. "Shāh" (king) as Śāh or, alternatively, change the Skt./Guj. "śabda" (word) to *shabda*, I have decided to retain both 'ś' and 'sh', although in pronunciation, they have more or less the same phonetic value.

Nasals have been transliterated according to their classes; for instance, if an *anusvāra* is followed by the retroflex consonant 'ṛ', it is transliterated 'ṛ̃' or if it is followed by the velar 'kh', it is transliterated 'ṅ'. Many Hindi and Gujarati words end with a nasalized



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vowel. These are indicated with an 'n', as in "piyūn" (beloved) or "mathuñ" (head). The *anusvāra* is transliterated as 'ṇ' as in "siṇha."

Whereas in Sanskrit, the short inherent vowel 'a' in the last consonant of a word is usually sounded and transliterated, in Hindi and Gujarati, this final 'a' frequently goes unpronounced; for instance, *das avatār* (Guj./Hin.) instead of *dasa avatāra* (Skt.) or *saṃsār* (Guj./Hin.) instead of *saṃsāra* (Skt.). An exception to this are words such as *mārga* or *śabda* which end in a conjunct consonant. Accordingly, the final short vowel of Gujarati and Hindi terms has been dropped except when the 'a' vowel is pronounced. It should be noted, however, that in the footnotes to the translations, when words from the *gināns* are given, they are transliterated precisely as they occur in the Gujarati edition. Foreign words and names of places and languages that are in common English usage such as Allah, Islam, Delhi, Sind, Baghdad, Punjabi and so on have not been transliterated.

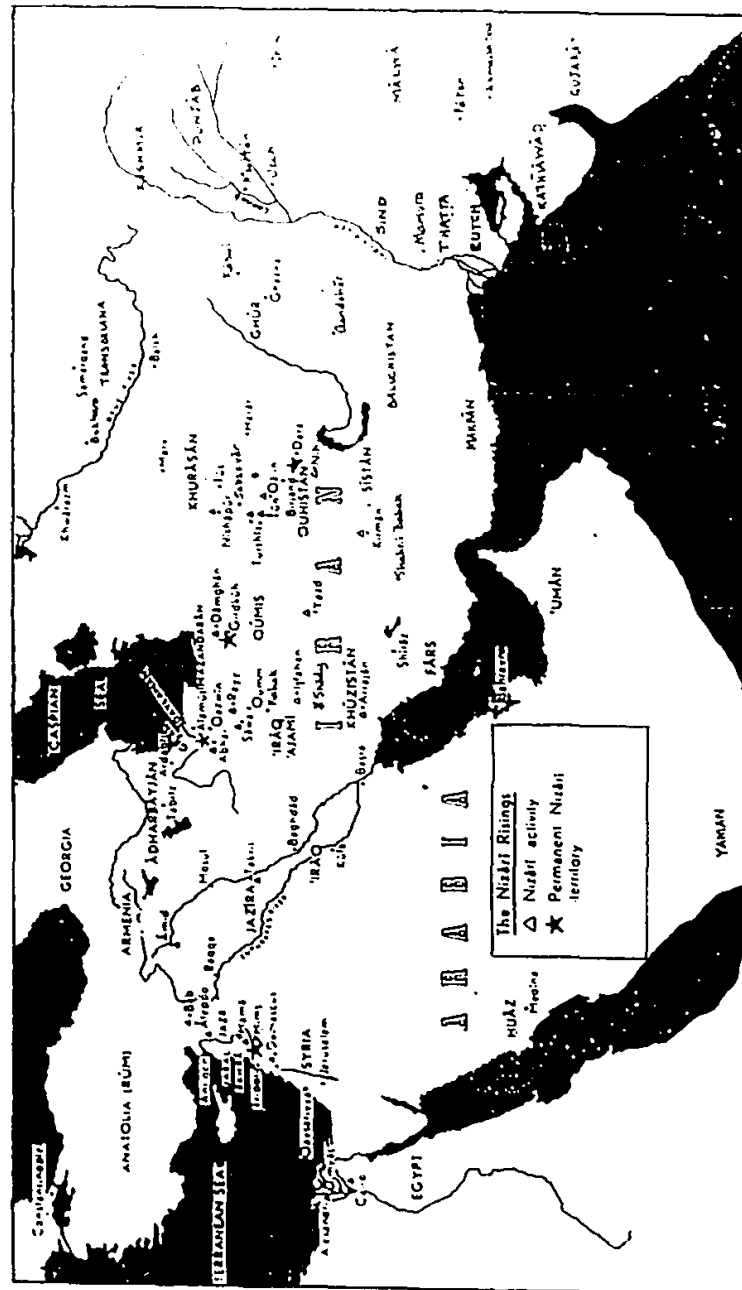
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MAP



Map of the Region ca. 13th Century
 Adapted from Hodgson, Order of Assassins (1955)

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS (C.E.)

642	Prophet Muḥammad dies: conflict over successor
661	ʿAlī ibn Ṭālib assassinated
711	Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim conquers Sind
765	Jaʿfar al-Šādiq dies: split between followers of Ismāʿīl and Mūsā al-Qāzim
883	Dāʿī al-Haytham sent to Sind
910	ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī (d. 934) becomes first Fāṭimid caliph
941–958	Controversy over anonymous dāʿī in Sind during reign of al-Muizz (d. 975)
959	Dāʿī Jalām b. Shaybān secures Fāṭimid rule in Sind
976	Amir Sebūktigin begins conquest of India
998–1031	Maḥmūd Ghaznawī conquers Sind
1004	Dāʿī Dāʿūd b. Naṣr establishes defense alliance with Ānandpāl
1010	Caliph al-Qādir launches anti-Fāṭimid campaign
1010	Maḥmūd Ghaznawī massacres Ismāʿīlis in Multān
1011–25	Ismāʿīlī-Ḥabbārid alliance in al-Manṣūrah
1026	Maḥmūd Ghaznawī massacres Ismāʿīlis in al-Manṣūrah: ends Arab rule in Sind
1019	Druze declare Fāṭimid caliph al-Ḥākim (d. 1021) divine
1051	Pro-Ismāʿīlī Sūmrahs wrest back Thaṭṭa in Lower Sind from Ghaznawids
1052	Caliph al-Qāʾim sponsors anti-Fāṭimid manifesto in Baghdad
1057	Fāṭimids gain brief control of Baghdad under pro-Fāṭimid Turk, al-Basāsiri
1090	Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ captures fortress of Alamūt in Daylamān
1092	Niẓām al-Mulk assassinated by an Ismāʿīlī fidāʿī, Abū Ṭāhir Arrānī
1094	al-Ghazālī's critique of the Ismāʿīlis at the behest of Caliph al-Mustazhir
1094	al-Muṣṭansir dies: split between followers of Niẓār and al-Mustaʿli
1100	Niẓārīs seize fortress of Girdkūh
1160–1175	Ghūrīds attack and destroy Ismāʿīlī supporters in Sind
1164	Ḥasan ʿala Ḍhikrihi al-Salām (d. 1210) proclaims the Qiyāmah
1206/36	Ismāʿīlī uprisings in Delhi during reign of Illūtmish and his daughter, Raḍiyya
1210	Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III publicly repudiates the Qiyāmah
1220	Beginning of the Mongol invasion of the Islamic empire
1256–7	Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh surrenders Alamūt followed by Mongol massacre
1275	Ismāʿīlis briefly recapture Alamūt



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PART A

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Many times I have recommended to my spiritual children that they should remember the Ginans, that they should understand the meaning of these Ginans and that they should carry these meanings in their hearts.

It is most important that my spiritual children from wherever they may come should, through the ages and from generation to generation, hold to this tradition which is so special, so unique and so important to my jamat.

Karachi, 16.12.1964

I feel that unless we are able to continue this wonderful tradition . . . we will lose some of our past which is most important to us and must be kept throughout our lives.

Dacca, 17.10.1960¹

The above counsels of the present *imām* (leader, spiritual head) of the “Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims,”² His Royal Highness Prince Karīm al-Ḥusaynī Āghā Khān IV, are a direct and forceful endorsement of the *ginān* tradition, a heritage of devotional poetry of the Satpan’h Khojahs, Indian successors of the Fāṭimid and Nizārī Ismā‘īlī sect of Shī‘ah Muslims.

The *gināns* constitute a corpus of sacred poetry that was allegedly composed by Nizārī Ismā‘īlī *dā‘īs* or *pīrs* (preachers, missionaries) between the eleventh and twentieth

¹ Ginan-e Sharif: Our Wonderful Tradition (Vancouver: Ismailia Association for Canada, n.d.), i.

² This is the name officially used by the sect today.



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centuries C.E. to facilitate conversion to Ismā'ilism mainly in the northwestern area of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.³ It has been argued that *gināns*, which probably originated as an oral tradition, had most likely taken on a manuscript form by the sixteenth century.⁴ Indeed, internal evidence in works attributed to Pir Shams corroborates this view and even suggests that the practice of recording these songs in writing may have begun as early as the thirteenth century.⁵ However, the oldest extant *ginān* manuscript is dated 1736 C.E. The term *ginān* itself comes from the Sanskrit word *jñāna* which means sacred knowledge or wisdom.⁶ Traditionally sung during daily ritual prayers, *gināns* have been revered for generations among the Satpanth Ismā'ilīs as *śāstra*, that is, sacred scripture.

Composed in several Indian languages and dialects such as Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Saraiki and Sindhi, *gināns* are rich in imagery and symbolism drawn from the religious

- 3 This area was called Hind and Sind by medieval Muslim geographers. Stretching from the highlands of Baluchistan to the Bay of Bengal and from Kashmir to Sri Lanka, the landmass is now divided into Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. It should be noted, however, that the activities of the Ismā'ili *da'wah* (mission) were concentrated in the northwestern area of the subcontinent including Sind, Punjab, Multān, Gujarat and Mālwa, Kashmir, and present-day Rajasthan, Cutch, and Kāthiāwād. Cf. C. Collin Davies, *An Historical Atlas of the Indian Peninsula*, 2nd ed. (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1959), and K. Srinivasa Kini & Rao, B. Shanker, *Oxford Pictorial Atlas of Indian History*, 10th ed. (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1967).
- 4 Nanji advances three main arguments in support of the view that the practice of writing *gināns* was already established by the sixteenth century. For details, see Azim Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'ili Tradition of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent* (New York: Caravan Books, 1978), 10–13.
- 5 There is an interesting verse in the *gināns* attributed to Pir Shams that makes an explicit reference to their written form:
O Brother! Whoever does not follow what has been inscribed on paper,
That one will surely beat the chest in repentance. 16:18
- 6 Since *gināns* are typically sung, the derivation of the term may also be linked to the Arabic *ganna* (to sing). Cf. Gulshan Khakee, "The *Dasa Avatāra* of the Satpanthi Ismailis and Imam Shahis of Indo-Pakistan" (Harvard: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1972), 3. However, in the hymns themselves, the word *ginān* generally connotes religious teaching or knowledge, thus suggesting that the Sanskrit derivation is more likely. Nonetheless, this *double entendre* should be noted as it is a recurrent feature of the tradition.

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and cultural milieu of the Indo-Pak subcontinent. In fact, many *gināns* appear to have been shaped by the languages and religious idioms of local Hindu, Ṣūfī, and Tāntric traditions to such an extent that often their link to Nizārī Ismāʿīlism is difficult to discern.⁷ The entire *ginān* corpus consists of about one thousand works whose lengths vary from 5 to 400 verses.⁸ Of these, less than one-tenth have been edited and translated, much less analysed.

It has been rightly remarked that the Ismāʿīlīs are “a tiny minority of a minority within the Muslim faith.”⁹ The sect is estimated to be about eight percent of the Shīʿah branch of Islam, itself comprising a mere fifth of the Muslim world. The Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs form an international community of about fifteen million people spread among more than twenty-five countries.¹⁰ Although this far-flung community thus embraces an impressive diversity of cultures, languages and histories,¹¹ in actual fact, the prevalent

⁷ For a discussion of the embedded nature of *gināns* see, for instance, my article on the problem of syncretism in the *Brahma Prakāśa*: Tazim R. Kassam, “Syncretism on the Model of Figure-Ground: A Study of *Brahma Prakāśa*,” *Indian Strategies of Interpretation: Religion, Philosophy and Text*, ed. Katherine Young (Atlanta: Scholars Press, forthcoming).

⁸ Two decades ago, based on a list compiled by Alibhai Nanji of Hyderabad, Azim Nanji estimated the total number of *gināns* to be about 800. Nagib Tajdin of Montreal, however, who has a private collection of *ginān* manuscripts, thinks the number is much higher, since he has discovered several unpublished *gināns* in his manuscripts. (Personal communication). Ali Asani has recently revised the estimated number of *gināns* to “approximately one thousand hymn-like poems.” See Ali S. Asani, *The Harvard Collection of Ismaili Literature in Indic Languages: A Descriptive Catalog and Finding Aid* (Riverside: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992), 4, (author’s typescript).

⁹ Raymond B. Williams, *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 186–188.

¹⁰ Ibid. As a result of successive emigrations throughout their history, Ismāʿīlī communities are to be found today in the Middle East (Syria, Iran, Lebanon, Iraq and Kuwait), Asia (Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Chinese and Russian Turkestan), Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, West and South Africa) and the West (Europe, Britain, Canada, Australia and the U.S.A.).

¹¹ Pockets of Ismāʿīlīs have lived in communist areas of Asia as well as in the Middle East for long periods, but have remained in *taqīyah* (dissimulation, disguise) to escape political and religious oppression. In the last half century, an increasing number of them have emerged and renewed their contacts with the present *imām*.

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form of religious practice among the Ismāʿīlīs today is that of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, the form of Ismāʿīlism that evolved in the Indo-Pak subcontinent.¹²

Modern Ismāʿīlism cannot be understood without a full historical appreciation of the role and significance of the *ḡinān* tradition of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs. Not only did this tradition play an important role in the founding of a new religious subgroup through the conversion of Hindus¹³ to Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, but it also sustained and preserved this small community in the Indo-Pak region over a period of some eight centuries. It is thus not surprising that the *ḡinān* corpus came to be revered as sacred scripture within the sect. The economic and institutional strengths of modern Ismāʿīlism, moreover, may be attributed to the successful foundation of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlī community in India. Nonetheless, the historical significance of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism within the context of the development and preservation of the Ismāʿīlī sect has yet to be recognised.

Within the present worldwide Ismāʿīlī community, there are three main subgroups based on the history, practices and traditions each has inherited: Middle Eastern, Central and East Asian, and South Asian.¹⁴ Ismāʿīlī communities of the former two subgroups

-
- 12 This is particularly the case with modernized or westernized Ismāʿīlīs who are primarily in control of the management of the worldwide community. From showcase Ismāʿīlī structures such as the Ismaili Centre in Cromwell Gardens, London, U.K. and the monumental *jamāʿat khānah* in Burnaby, Canada, to simpler prayer houses spread across East Africa, Pakistan and the Indian subcontinent, religious ceremonies are conducted in Gujarati or Hindustāni, and follow the tradition of Satpanth.
- 13 As more Satpanth materials are examined, it will become possible to determine precisely whether or which religious groups other than the Hindus were converted to Satpanth Ismāʿīlism.
- 14 Accordingly, primary sources of Ismāʿīlī history reflect the languages of these areas. To date, it is mostly the Arabo-Persian sources that have been studied, although with the emerging scholarship on Satpanth materials, sources in Indic languages such as Gujarati and Hindi are becoming known. As for the literary heritage preserved among the Central and East Asian Ismāʿīlīs, not much is known as is the case with traditions of Ismāʿīlīs in northern frontier areas of Pakistan such as Gilgit and Chitral who have evolved literatures in oral dialects such as Brushaski and Shina. See Azim Nanji, "Ismāʿīlism," *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations*, ed. Seyyed H. Nasr (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 184.

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have become visible only in recent times, and their practices remain local, regionally specific and largely unknown. On the other hand, the South Asian heritage of **Satpanth** Ismāʿīlism forms the universal religious language of those Ismāʿīlī communities and religious institutions that are scattered across the Indo-Pak subcontinent, Africa and the Western world. These communities, mainly descendants of the Khojahs (the name of the Indian converts to Satpanth),¹⁵ form the dominant subgroup of modern Ismāʿīlism in as much as they furnish the main economic base of the community, and occupy influential, high-ranking positions at both regional and international levels of Ismāʿīlī leadership.¹⁶ Given the formative, historical role of the Satpanth tradition for Ismāʿīlism today, it is unusual that this area of study has not received the deliberate and sustained attention it deserves both within Ismāʿīlī scholarship in general, and within current institutions of research among the Ismāʿīlīs themselves.¹⁷

As a modest attempt to remedy this situation, I wish to offer in this dissertation an extensive scholarly translation of an anthology of 106 *gināns*, prefaced by a critical introduction to the times and the figure of Pīr Shams, an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* (ca. 12th

- 15 According to **Satpanth tradition, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn gave the converts the honorable title of *kwājah* (lord, master).** However, the term *khajah* is not restricted to Satpanth Ismāʿīlī converts, but it is also commonly used to designate Muslim converts in the subcontinent. See Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978: 74, 206), and the article “Khodja,” *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), 256.
- 16 To cite some instances: the International Co-ordinator of the Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Boards is Mohammed Keshavjee; the International Co-ordinator of the Grants and Review Boards which oversees the budgets of both I.T.R.E.B.s and National Councils is Nizar Walji; and arguably the most influential leader of the international Ismāʿīlī community this century directly below the Imām was Diwān Sir Eboo Pīrbhai who died recently. The forefathers of all three of these East African Ismāʿīlīs came from the Indian subcontinent.
- 17 For a demonstration of the neglect of Satpanth studies, see my detailed discussion below in the section on review of the literature. In a private communication, I was informed that in recent assessments of its direction and policies, the Institute of Ismaili Studies, which is the premier research institution of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs, has adopted the position to postpone any concerted research on the primary sources of Satpanth.

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century)¹⁸ is credited with the composition of these poems, and who reportedly travelled from the northern highlands of Persia to Western India for the express purpose of spreading the influence of Ismā'ilism in the Indian subcontinent. In addition to numerous short poems, eleven major works have been attributed to him.¹⁹ Except for two of these (the **Garbīs** and **Brahma Prakāśa**) and a few short poems, most of the works attributed to Pīr Shams have yet to be translated. While in due course, a comprehensive study of all the works of Pīr Shams may be attempted, as a step in that direction this dissertation focuses on an anthology of his poems that has been published in a Gujarati volume bearing the English subtitle, **Collection of Ginans composed by the Great Ismaili Saint Pīr Shams**.²⁰ This Anthology of 106 works consists mainly of his short poems, but also includes a sequence of twenty-eight songs called **Garbīs**.

It should be noted that with the exception of specimens of his work such as the **Garbīs** and a few selected poems, this is the first time that an extensive and major translation of the works attributed to Pīr Shams, and of the Gujarati Anthology as a whole, has been attempted. Since previously published translations of *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams are too loose or florid for conducting rigorous and systematic scholarly analysis, the conservative translations offered here should, I hope, make a significant contribution by facilitating such a scholarly study of these religious poems. For instance, a free

¹⁸ See Chapter Five for a discussion on the dating of Pīr Shams.

¹⁹ These are: **Brahma Prakāśa**, **Garbī**, **Chandrabhāṇa**, **Mansamjāmpī**, **Vaḍī**, **Saloko**, **Vaḍo**, **Surbhāṇa**, **Nāno**, **Das Avatār**, **Hans Hansali** (or **Mulbandhno**, **Achoḍo**), **Rājā Govarcand tathā teni benni kathā**, **Vaek Mojo** and **Vaek Nāno**.

²⁰ **Mahān Ismā'īlī Saḥta Pīr Shams Racit Gīnān Saṅgraha** [English title in the Anthology: **Collection of Ginans composed by the Great Ismaili Saint Pīr Shams**] (Bombay: Ismailia Association for India, 1952), 106 pages. This work was no longer being published by the Ismailia Association in 1979 when I did my fieldwork in Bombay, India. However, the Association office did stock reprints issued under the auspices of Nurdīn Gulāmusayn Dareḍiyā.



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translation by V. N. Hooda of the *Garbīs* and a few other poems, was published by Ivanow in *Collectanea* in 1948.²¹ While helpful in some ways, V. N. Hooda takes the liberty to interpret or liberally add glosses within his translations.²² On the other hand, G. Allana's recently published volume of *ginān* translations, which also includes several short poems of Pir Shams, is marred by a forced attempt at poetic style.²³

The decision to translate the approximately 1,800 verses in this Anthology is based on the following considerations. Firstly, this Gujarati edition of Pir Shams' *gināns* is the official volume currently used for recitation by the Ismā'īlīs in their *jamā'at khānahs* (prayer halls). Published by the Ismailia Association for India in 1952, it represents the culmination of a century of assiduous activity by members of the community to make *gināns* available in print, an activity that included collecting and collating *ginān* manuscripts, transcribing *gināns* from the Khojki²⁴ to the Gujarati script, separating them according to the authors indicated in their *bhaṇitā* or signature line, and

21 V. N. Hooda, trans. "Some specimens of Satpanth Literature," ed. W. Ivanow, *Collectanea* vol. 1. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1948), 55-137.

22 Thus, whereas my translations remain as faithful as possible to the actual language of the verse, his include some extraneous explanatory materials. For instance, the fourth verse of the first *Garbī* is:

te to garabī ramatāñ noratā māñhe,
gura shamasa gayā che tyāñya.

Mr. Valimahomed Hooda's translation:

When the *Pir* arrived, the Hindus were celebrating the days of Norta,
dancing in a ring and singing songs in praise of the goddess.

My translation:

It was *Navarātrī* and everyone was dancing the *garbī*,
To such a place Guru Shams went.

Hooda's translation includes a gloss on the meaning of *garbī*, which is helpful, but he also interpolates the information about Hindus.

23 G. Allana, *Ginans of Ismaili Pirs: Rendered into English Verse* (Karachi: Ismailia Association for Pakistan, 1984). For further details on Allana's work, see below Chapter 3: Review of the Literature.

24 Khwājah Sindhi, also known as Khojki, was a secret script used among the Satpanth Ismā'īlīs to record *gināns*. According to tradition, it was invented by Pir Šadr al-Dīn. Asani says that "Khojki is a refined and polished version of Lohāñākī," "or Lāñī, the script of the Hindu Lohāñā community." Cf. Ali S. Asani, "The Khojki Script: A Legacy of Ismaili Islam in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107, no. 1 (1987), 439.



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occasionally, providing glossaries to the collected works.²⁵ While discrepancies do exist between manuscript versions and printed editions of *gināns*, the decision to use the Gujarati edition as the basis of my translations is based on the fact that as an official publication, it has been regarded as authoritative by the community itself. In other words, the Anthology represents a currently normative version of the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams.

Secondly, the shorter *gināns* of Pīr Shams contained in the Anthology are far more frequently recited during the daily *jamā'at khānah* rituals than the longer works attributed to him. When the longer compositions are recited, they are sung either over several days of morning or evening services or, more commonly, only a few selected verses of the whole work are recited. In terms of actual performance, then, the shorter *gināns* of Pīr Shams are much more well-known and utilized by the *jamā'at* (congregation).

Thirdly, it is conjectured that a translation and analysis of a much wider selection of the *gināns* of Pīr Shams as undertaken in this thesis would assist in gleaning a fuller picture of his life and the beginnings of **Satpanth Ismā'ilism**. In my previous study of a long (150 verses) mystical poem attributed to **Pīr Shams called Brahma Prakāśa** (Divine Illumination), several questions emerged which, it became clear, could be addressed only if a broader spectrum of his works were studied in tandem. These issues included the question of his dates, his context and his strategy of gaining support for the Ismā'ilī cause. For instance, while the **Brahma Prakāśa** demonstrated a common strategy of preaching in the Satpanth *da'wah*, namely, the technique of syncretism, the question of

²⁵ There are a number of scholarly problems that arise from the nature and transmission of the *ginān* manuscript tradition that have been discussed in detail by Asani and Nanji. Cf. Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'ilī Tradition* (1978:9–14) and Asani, "The Khojki Script" (1987:439–449).



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authorship remained a problem since the linguistic and internal evidence in the poem pointed to a much later date of composition than that of the period identified with Pīr Shams.²⁶

Traditionally, Pīr Shams has been depicted as a heroic figure in the establishment of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* in Sind. Next to the obscure first *pīr* of the tradition, Satgūr Nūr, for whom there is virtually no historical evidence, Pīr Shams seems to have played a pivotal role in the foundation of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. Unfortunately, little is known about the actual activities of the *pīrs* and how they proceeded with their work. It was correctly anticipated that a wider survey of the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams would reveal a fuller and more complex picture of the man and the early Satpanth *daʿwah*. By translating and selectively analysing a range of poems associated with Pīr Shams, and by assessing the testimony preserved in the *gināns* in relation to what is known of his context and times, this dissertation has also endeavoured to shed some light on the formative period of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism.

The Role of *Gināns* in the Religious Life of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs

Across cultures, tuneful verse has been an immediate and moving way to express the human longing for the divine. Melody and poetry have fused together to create the beauty and inspiration of hymns and songs. The *ginān* tradition is rooted in the musical and poetic matrix of Indian culture where, in spaces from village to city, temple to court, and street corner to performance stage, devotional song is ubiquitous and richly varied.

Ginān recitation in the daily communal services of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs represents a long tradition of liturgical prayer. The religious function and meaning of these hymns

²⁶ For details, see Kassam, "Syncretism" (Scholars Press: forthcoming).



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are centred in their ritualized performance. Unlike the silent reading of the Qurʾān or the Bible, which may also constitute worship, the religious merit of *gināns* depends primarily on their oral performance, that is, upon their melodic articulation or musical recitation. In the context of Satpanth practice, to sing a *ginān* is to pray. Singing is ritualized into worship, a typical feature of the religious landscape of India. The *gināns* of the Ismāʿīlī *pīrs* are thus the Satpanth counterpart of the Hindu *bhajan* or *kīrtan*. They form a continuum in the religious life of the North Indian Sant and Bhakti traditions in the context of which poetry, melody and communal worship fuse to create religious meaning. It must be stressed, therefore, that in terms of their ritual role, *gināns* are primarily oral literature, although of course, they have a written form. In this respect, *gināns* are a typical case of scripture functioning primarily as aural phenomena.²⁷

Obviously, this performative aspect of *gināns* is hidden from view in its written, textual form. But there is a tacit understanding among the believers that the spirit of a *ginān* comes alive only when it is recited. In part, it is the sweet *rāg* (melody) of the *ginān* that is credited with creating the proper mood and disposition for prayer. Also, truly to have effect, the *ginān* must be recited by heart. To sing a *ginān* from a book is to place reliance on an external source, to introduce the intermediary of a written text between self and God, thus rendering the offering ritually imperfect. The most faithful reproduction, moreover, is to be found through oral memory, not in written

²⁷ For an elaboration of the aural dimensions of scripture, see William Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Harold Coward & David Goa, *Mantra: Hearing the Divine in India* (Chambersburg: Anima Books, 1991); and Joyce Irwin, ed., *Sacred Sound: Music in Religious Thought and Practice*, JAAR Thematic Studies 50/1 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983).

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manuscript.²⁸ Hence, elderly members of the *jamā'at* put great emphasis on the memorization of *gināns*, arguing that as ritual prayer or invocation, they must issue directly from the heart. Only when thus internalized would *gināns* manifest the power of *śabda* (sacred word), an idea similar to that held for the efficacious recitation of both the Qur'ān and the Vedas.

This unmediated link between the *gināns* and the believer's heart is stressed not only by an emphasis on memorization, but also on the correct receptivity or audition of the *gināns*. A verse from a poem attributed to Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn attests to the impact of *gināns* as follows:

*gināna bolore nīta nūre bhariyā,
evā haide tamāre harakhanā māejī*

Recite *gināns* and the self will fill with Light!
Thus will all your hearts be made blissful.²⁹

If properly attended to, *gināns* are thus believed to have the power to transform and to enlighten the heart. Accordingly, stories that describe the miraculous conversion of Hindus, bandits, wild beasts, and pigeons to Satpanth upon hearing the sweet and melodious words of the *gināns* abound in the tradition.³⁰ The moving effect of melodic recitation combined with the united chorus of congregational singing has been recorded in an oft-repeated anecdote about the late Ismail Ganji. Reputedly an impious Ismā'īlī of Junāgaḍh in Gujarat, India, he heard a verse of a *ginān* one evening in the

28 Note that "even after being recorded in Khojki, the community's special script, oral knowledge of ginanic texts was still necessary to ensure correct reading of an ambiguous alphabet." See Ali S. Asani, "The Ismaili Gināns as Devotional Literature," *Devotional Literature in South Asia: Current Research 1985-8*, ed. R. S. McGregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9, (author's typescript).

29 Collection of Ginans composed by the Great Ismaili Saint Pīr Sadrudīn (Mahān Ismā'īlī Saīta Pīr Sadardīn Racit gīnānono Saṅgraha) (Bombay: Ismailia Association for India, 1969), 61. Translation mine.

30 For instance, see Gināns 68, 70, and 91 translated in this dissertation.

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jamāʿat khānah which so touched him that tears flowed from his eyes. Immediately repenting his wayward ways, he began a new life and eventually became chief minister in the court of the ruler of Junāgaḍh.³¹ As an integral part of their communal worship, the recitation of *gināns* in the religious life of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs serves the dual purpose of expressing devotion and imparting the teachings of Satpanth.

Not surprisingly, therefore, *gināns* are deeply venerated. In expressing his own experience of this tradition of devotional singing, G. Allana captures a sentiment still widely shared in the community:

Ever since my early childhood, I recall hearing the sweet music of the *ginans*. When I was a little boy, my mother, Sharfībai would lift me, put me in her lap and sing to me the *ginans* of Ismaili Pirs. She had a very serene and melodious voice. I did not understand, then, as to what they were all about. I loved my mother, as well as her enchanting voice. My initiation into the realms of poetry and music was through the *ginans*.³²

Later on, Allana describes the profound and uplifting mood created by his mother's pre-dawn recitations of *gināns* in the *jamāʿat khānah* (prayer hall):

Everybody listened to her bewitching voice, singing a *ginan*. No other person, as is normally customary, dare join his or her voice with hers to sing in a chorus . . . The fragrance of that spiritual atmosphere still lingers in my mind . . . The weight of life's burdens dissolved.³³

Gināns are recited daily in the *jamāʿat khānahs*. Unlike the *ṣūfī* practice of *samāʿ* or the Hindu *kīrtan*, *ginān* recitation is not (presently) accompanied by any musical instruments.³⁴ A member of the congregation, male or female, who knows how to

31 The Great Ismaili Heroes (Karachi: Prince Alykhan Religious Night School, 1973), 98–99.

32 Allana, *Ginans of Ismaili Pirs* (1984:1). I owe my own love of music and poetry to my father, Huzurmukhī Rahim K. Jivraj, who is an admired *ginān* reciter.

33 Ibid., 2.

34 An interesting question is whether musical accompaniment was permitted in the past. I have been informed by a reliable source that in 1975 at the first International Convention of Ismailia Associations, it was resolved that no



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recite *gināns* is usually called upon by the *mukhī* (chief of ceremonies) to lead the recitation. Although slight variations in the embellishment of tunes will be found among singers, in general, *ginān* melodies are simple and uniform, and can be learnt without difficulty. Singers are not required to have any formal musical or voice training. However, fine singers are easily identifiable by their melodious voices, emotional and tuneful renderings, and correct pronunciation. Beautiful recitation is praised and encouraged, and it is not uncommon for individual members of the congregation to express personally their appreciation to *ginān* reciters. On special festivals, reputed reciters who can sing a large repertoire of *gināns* and who have been noted for their moving delivery are called upon to sing. These individuals, however, do not collectively constitute a special or separate and distinct class of performers within the *jamā'at* (congregation).

While the recitation of a *ginān* constitutes a ritual in itself, *gināns* also play a vital role in the conduct of other rites of worship performed by Satpanth Ismā'īlīs in their *jamā'at khānah*. This intimate relationship to rituals is indicated by the classification and arrangement of *gināns* that is to be found in manuscripts or printed books. Specific *gināns* are indicated for different times and types of prayer, for special occasions, and for various religious ceremonies. Thus, for instance, the evening prayers usually commence with *gināns* that emphasize the importance of prayer during the auspicious

musical instruments would be allowed to accompany *ginān* recitation in the *jamā'at khānah*. This suggests that the recitation of *gināns* to the accompaniment of music may have been in practice in some areas. Modern strictures against holding *ginān mehfil*s or musical recitals of *gināns* within the *jamā'at khānah* space is probably part of the modern trend toward the "Islamization" of Ismā'īlism. For a discussion of this trend, see Ali S. Asani, "The Khojahs of Indo-Pakistan: The Quest for an Islamic Identity," *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* (vol. 8 no. 1 (1983) 31-41), and Diamond Rattansi, "Islamization and the Khojah Ismā'īlī Community of Pakistan" (McGill University: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1987).



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hours of sunset.³⁵ Certain *gināns* that dwell upon mystical themes are recommended for the *subhu sādḥak* (lit. the quester before dawn). These *gināns* are recited before or after periods of meditation in the early morning hours. *Ventījo gināns* are recited for the sake of supplication or petition for mercy. *Ghaṭpāt gināns* accompany the ritual of drinking holy water, and a sub-category of these are sung when the water is actually sanctified. Similarly, there are special *gināns* to accompany funeral rites, to celebrate Navrūz (the Persian New Year) and the birthdays of Prophet Muḥammad and the Imām of the time (*ḥāḍir imām*), and to commemorate the latter's installation. Thus, a native taxonomy of *gināns* has been developed within the tradition according to appropriate context and ritual usage.³⁶

The religious meaning of *gināns* in the Satpanth Ismā'īlī tradition derives, therefore, from this nexus between devotional song, ritual worship and sacred community.³⁷ The recitation of *gināns* marks off sacred time and space, it creates an atmosphere of "majestic pathos and beauty,"³⁸ and it expresses communal feelings of worship and identity. Binding its participants to an experience of listening, singing and feeling, this

35 Typically sung are selected verses from the *ginān* Anant Akhāḍo attributed to Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn. The first line of the work warns, "O Seekers, do not fail to observe the time of *sandhyā* (evening prayer)!" (*Āshāñjī, sandhyā vclā tame mata koī chūko*). *Sandhyā*, lit. union, juncture, may refer to the hour of sunrise, noon and sunset; special prayers of this name, that is, *sandhyā*, are commonly offered by the Brahmins at these times. See J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, trans. H. Beauchamp (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1906), 251–270.

36 That this scheme is still observed was verified by al-Wā'iz Rai Amiraly Amlani who graciously provided me with his unpublished typescript, "List of Ginans for Recitation on Various Occasions," prepared for the Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Board of Canada, March 15, 1988. For details on the role of *gināns* in the ordinary lives of Satpanth Ismā'īlīs, see Asani, "Gināns as Devotional Literature" (1992:11–12).

37 Non-Ismā'īlīs are not allowed to participate in the services held at the *jamā'at khānahs*. This aspect of exclusion alone marks off the Satpanth Ismā'īlīs as a special group that is self-identified as a sacred community.

38 Wladimir Ivanow, "The Sect of the Imam Shah in Gujerat," *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* XII (1936), 68.

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performative aspect of the *ginān* tradition is clearly a crucial factor sustaining the life and force of the Satpanth tradition and its teachings.³⁹ While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to enter into a detailed analysis of the *gināns* in terms of their aural and melodic dimensions, or their interaction with and relation to the ritual practices of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, this brief discussion is intended to reveal how central and profound is their religious function.

39 Many of these remarks are based on my fieldwork on *ginān* tunes which I conducted while doing research in India between 1979–84, and on interviews with members of the *jamāʿat*. As an insider to the tradition with exposure to Ismāʿīli *jamāʿats* in East Africa, India, Britain and North America, I am also able to draw on personal observations of Satpanth practices in these areas.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE NEGLECT OF SATPANTH ISMĀ'ĪLISM IN THE CONTEXT OF ISMĀ'ILĪ STUDIES

Scholarship in Islamic Studies has made far greater advances in the study of Sunnī Islam than in that of the Shī'ah minority. In his bibliographic review of sources on Shī'ism, Wilferd Madelung observes that, "Scholarly literature on Shī'ism is still limited and uneven. There is no comprehensive survey of Shī'ism in its full range."¹ Whereas greater progress has been made on the subject in the last half century, the study of Islām continues by and large to be a study of its Sunnī expressions. In recent times, when the Shī'ah have received scholarly attention, this has generally been in the context of politics and religious fundamentalism.

The problems of the study of Shī'ism originate, however, within the broader development of the history of Islam. Long-held misconceptions about the Shī'ah can be traced to early Sunnī works on heresies that propagated views of the Shī'ah as an extremist, misguided, and heterodox branch of Islam.² Initially, western scholarship accepted Sunnī-centred definitions of Islam and embellished the latter's exaggerated

¹ Wilferd Madelung, "Shiism," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 13, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: MacMillan, 1986), 247.

² For instance, see Abū Muḥammad Ibn Ḥazm's *Kitāb al-fiṣal fi'l-milal*, partial Eng. transl. I. Friedlaender, "The Heterodoxies of the Shiites in the Presentation of Ibn Ḥazm," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 28 (1907), 1-80 & 29 (1908), 1-183; 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī's *Kitāb al-milal wa'l niḥal*, partial Eng. transl. A. K. Kazi & J. G. Flynn, *Muslim Sects and Divisions* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1984).



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accounts of the Shī'ah with its own opinions. These questionable beginnings of Shī'ī studies may thus partly account for why the field trails so far behind Sunnī studies, in addition, of course, to the simple fact that Sunnīs do account for the majority of the Muslim world.

In particular, the Ismā'īlīs, a sub-sect of the Shī'ah, have for centuries been the target of Sunnī (and elements of Shī'ī) aspersion. Accused from the beginning of *bid'a* (innovation) and *ghuluww* (extremism) for their religious speculations, especially their doctrine of *imāmah*, the Ismā'īlīs were commonly referred to by the defamatory epithet *mulhid*, "a Muslim term of abuse for a religious deviant or heretic."³ In his discussion of this problem, Marshall Hodgson says, "The world has usually heard about the Ismā'īlīs from their enemies."⁴ Consequently, Ismā'īlism has suffered major problems of misrepresentation both within and outside Islam.⁵ Significant strides have been made in this area, however, since the efforts of scholars such as Wladimir Ivanow, Henri Corbin, and Marshall Hodgson who challenged and revised older notions, and who gave new direction to Ismā'īlī studies.

This is the broader framework of a more pointed issue. While Shī'ism and its various sub-sects including the Ismā'īlīs now have a place on the map of Islamic studies, the area marked Ismā'īlism has curious gaps. There appears to be considerable discrepancy among scholars as to which period or aspect of Ismā'īlī history merits scholarly attention. Curiously, while the first half of Ismā'īlī history is richly detailed, suddenly the sketch turns bare for later periods. It has been argued that "meagre sources" are

³ Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 5.

⁴ Marshall G. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismā'īlīs Against the Islamic world* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1955), 22. Also see the discussion in Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1967).

⁵ For a review of the problem, see Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs* (1990:1–31).



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responsible for these sharp contrasts of clarity and perplexity that exist with regard to its different phases.⁶ Yet, as will be shown in the case of Satpanth Ismāʿilism, although primary sources are ample, general studies of Ismāʿilī history have uniformly glossed over this phase.

Some Methodological Issues

Before proceeding to an assessment of the place (or more accurately, lack of place) of **Satpanth Ismāʿilism** in Ismāʿilī studies, I would like, however, to make some general remarks on methodology and on the problems of studying Ismāʿilism.⁷ In common with the study of religions, the study of Ismāʿilism presents one of the most difficult challenges of scholarship, namely, coming to terms with a tradition's extraordinary internal diversity and regional variation. In its historical evolution, Ismāʿilism developed through several phases, and within the context of many societies, languages, cultures and landscapes. Each phase had its own ramifications, including socio-economic and political ones, and gave rise to sub-sects and differing traditions. This represents immense diversity and variation. In the words of Bernard Lewis, "Ismāʿilism was expressed in infinite forms both doctrinal and organisational."⁸ This fact makes the task of a comprehensive understanding of the Ismāʿilī tradition extremely difficult.

In many respects, the study of Ismāʿilism mirrors the same problem exemplified in the study of Islam or Hinduism or any other religious tradition: plurality in unity. The

⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁷ Special note: the short title Ismāʿilism is used to refer here to the Shīʿah sect of Imāmī Ismāʿilī Nizārī Satpanth Muslims including their total historical tradition. Specific Ismāʿilī periods or other Ismāʿilī sects such as the Mustaʿlians will be exactly identified.

⁸ Bernard Lewis, *Origins of Ismāʿilism* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1940), 1.



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problem of how to investigate religious traditions without objectifying them is a constant struggle of methodology. At the heart of this issue is the error of reification and normatization. Given that a specific sect or religion may encompass unique and diversified historical traditions, how is the scholar to guard against the essentialist temptation to offer fixed, authoritative and a priori definitions? To some extent, historical and phenomenological approaches to the study of religions have evolved as a response to this problem.⁹ Studies that focus on religious data within their specific historical and social contexts can help to alleviate the problem of reification.

Yet, in practice this is not always the case. It is not uncommon for focused studies of a society or culture to become the platform for normative discourse. The danger is for particular studies unconsciously to accept normative judgments that exist *within* a narrowly defined period or group and then unwittingly to apply these criteria to other data. Truth claims and normative thinking are an integral part of religious life, and it is obviously important to be able to identify them for the specific case under study. However, the question is how to describe the beliefs and values of a religious group in varying historical and cultural contexts without *recommending* them, implicitly or explicitly. For instance, in the case of Islam, how can one resist using its “classical” tradition as a measure of the range of its historical and local expressions, or in the case of Hinduism, how can one be critical of the implicit judgments that lie beneath distinctions such as the “Great”, that is, the scriptural tradition, and the “Little”, namely, the folk tradition.

⁹ For an extended discussion of such problems, see Robert D. Baird, *Category Formation and the History of Religions* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1971).



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Ivanow, prescient in his approach to Ismāʿīlī studies (although, we shall see that he, too, cannot resist the above characterizations) points to the multiformity of Ismāʿīlism at the beginning of his monograph, **Brief Survey of the Evolution of Ismailism**:

Ismailism is here taken as a whole, with all its branches and subdivisions, despite the discrepancies, sometimes considerable, in their tradition and dogma, and without prejudice to their claims for priority.¹⁰

It is inevitable that societies become differentiated as they experience changes over time, but Ismāʿīlism is marked by changes of great intensity over the course of its history. There are many reasons for these changes including divisions caused by internal conflicts, emigrations and altered contexts. Thus, Ivanow properly cautions that

... nothing can be so erroneous and ruinous to the progress of the study of Ismailism as the ... disregard of chronology and of the local peculiarities of the materials at our disposal. It is not only absurd, but even ridiculous to regard Ismailism as a kind of homogeneous and uniform stuff from which we can take "samples" indiscriminately.¹¹

While this principle of understanding different expressions of Ismāʿīlī faith and doctrine within their specific contexts is self-evident, holding together the manifest diversity of Ismāʿīlism has been, in fact, a vexing problem for scholarship. For how is one adequately to represent a tradition that is at once one and many and whose internal distinctions are often stark and wide. The problem is aggravated, as Ivanow warns, by a search for the essence or ideal expression of Ismāʿīlism, that is, for some normative form by which to identify the sect.

As noted, this is an important methodological problem for the study of religions in general, but it takes on particular significance for the study of Ismāʿīlism because of the doctrine of *imāmah*. In my view, the concept of *imāmah*, which is the theological

¹⁰ Wladimir Ivanow, **Brief Survey of the Evolution of Ismailism**
 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1952), preface.

¹¹ Ibid., 28.



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foundation of Shī'ism and Ismā'īlism, articulates an ideal of leadership which is inherently dynamic and unconstrained. As the locus of religious authority for all Shī'ah Muslims, the *imām* is a norm-setter in as much as he interprets scripture, and yet, each *imām* may at any time abrogate norms set by his predecessor or even himself, and institute new regulations and ordinances. This principle of the *imām*'s total prerogative to change or replace norms according to the times, and according to his will, has been variously expressed over the centuries by Ismā'īlī writers in the language of the intellectual currents of the time and place. Formulated in the most general terms, the Shī'ah doctrine of *imāmah* makes the claim that the legitimate successor of Prophet Muḥammad in his leadership over the Muslim *ummah* (community) was the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib; and that this right of succession was passed on through 'Alī and his wife, the Prophet's daughter Fāṭimah, to his male descendants. These hereditary heads bear the title, "*imām*" (lit. leader of the prayer). Like the Prophet Muḥammad, the *imāms* are considered to be *ma'ṣūm* (infallible, immune from error) and appointed by the will of God. Their divinely-guided task is to interpret the Revelation and the Prophet's teachings and, accordingly, to guide the Muslim community in both spiritual and temporal matters.¹²

The central claim of this doctrine is that the *imāms* possess a divine wisdom and the authority to interpret the Qur'ān, and are endowed with a spiritual power or Light (*nūr*) to guide perfectly their communities through the centuries. As expressed in Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī doctrine, the *imām* is the *qur'ān-i ṣāmit* (silent Qur'ān) in relation to the Prophet Muḥammad who is the enunciator of revelation (*qur'ān-i nāṭiq*). As the Prophet's *waṣī* (deputy, spiritual executor), it is the *imām*'s sole prerogative to interpret

¹² For discussions of *imāmah*, see Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs* (1990:137–141); Sami Makrem's "The Philosophical Significance of the Imām in Ismā'īlism," *Studia Islamica* XXVII (1967) 31–53; Wilferd Madelung, "Imāma," *Encyclopædia of Islam* II, vol. 3 (1971); Madelung, "Shiism," (1985:243–247).



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the inner meaning (*bāṭin*) of the revelation. Thus, Ismāʿīlī doctrine makes supreme religious authority (*imāmah*) over the Muslim *ummah* (community) an exclusive and hereditary office. As Hodgson points out,

It was the *imām*'s institutional position which made impossible any compromise between the Sunnī pattern and Ismāʿīlī claims . . . [since his position claimed] priority of authority over those external symbols upon which the Sunnīs had agreed to rely for ultimate sanction.¹³

It is this question of the *imām*'s authority over the external symbols of religion that makes the concept of *imāmah* implicitly dynamic and unconstrained. Given the principle of perpetual interpretation, the office of the *imām* is thus intrinsically opposed to a dogmatism that would be inevitable were Islam to be identified with some permanent and static interpretation of the Qurʾān. Thus, the natural corollary of the belief that the *imām* gives direction according to the times is the claim that the message of the Qurʾān is not static and fixed in the past, but that its meaning is constantly manifest through the *imām*'s continuous and timely guidance. Since, in relation both to revelation and *sharīʿah* (religious law), the *imām* enjoys the sole privilege of interpretation, and since he alone has the capacity and authority to engage in *taʾwīl* (exegesis), effectively then, the *imām* has the same sweeping powers that the Prophet Muḥammad possessed after the *hijrah* (emigration to Medina) to introduce changes in society, whether religious or secular. As Madelung says, the *imāms* continue the "prophetic mission in every respect except that they do not bring scripture."¹⁴ This includes the right to revoke injunctions and patterns of the past, and to reconstitute them for the present and the future.

¹³ Hodgson, *Order of Assassins* (1955:19).

¹⁴ Madelung, "Shiism" (1986:243).



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It is this unfettered right enjoyed by the institution of *imāmah* to interpret revelation and to set norms, and yet also to authorize new interpretations and to alter norms that might help to make some sense of the upheavals of the Shī'ah within the *ummah*, as well as of the various discrete developments within Ismā'īlism. The most obvious source of division and diversification in the history of Shī'ism was the problem of religious authority, and the conflicts caused by competing claims to the imāmate. Additionally, however, the *imāms* could themselves have been the prime instigators of change since, as a tenet of the faith, it is they who were to perpetually articulate the meaning of the faith for the community with reference to its context.¹⁵

All this has interesting implications. Firstly, since the guidance of former *imāms* is historically determined, logically speaking it would be unacceptable within the context of Ismā'īlī theology to uphold any specific Ismā'īlī tradition in the past as the ideal. The cumulative traditions of the past would have to stand equal before the present, whose norms are to be dictated only by the living *imām*. (This, of course, is all very well at the abstract level. In practical terms, there have been and continue to be many competing claims and divisions over which inherited tradition is superior and, therefore, is to be upheld.¹⁶) Strictly speaking then, if the *imām's* task is to give shape to religion in the crucible of history, conservatism of form and interpretation would be antithetical to an Ismā'īlī worldview.

Secondly, the theological task in Ismā'īlism is thus never complete, for no one theology or ritual expression may be suitable to all time. To make absolute, doctrinal and liturgical

¹⁵ He may do this directly, or more commonly, by delegating the task to his lieutenants, the *dā'īs*.

¹⁶ On the polemic within the community, see Mehboob Kamadia's unpublished monograph, "Confidential Report on Refutation of Hindu Elements in Our Holy Ginans" (Toronto: 1989) and Akbarally Meherally, *Understanding Ismailism: A Unique Tariqah of Islam* (Burnaby: A. M. Trust, 1988).



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solutions that are contextual and thus, time-marked, would go against the ideal of critical self-renewal implicit in the doctrine of *imāmah*. Thus, in times of rapid changes in culture and context, one might expect that the primary function of the *imām* would be to revitalize the tradition or to furnish symbolic forms and social arrangements that would support the faith in that specific context.

Religious change and adaptation are thus seen to be innate, if not inevitable, processes in this perspective. Thus, the diversity and the distinctive developments of Ismāʿīlism are explicable both from within the faith's own understanding of the *imām*'s role as well as in terms of historical method and analysis. Accordingly, essentialist approaches to Ismāʿīlism may not only be inappropriate from a scholarly viewpoint, but also from the Ismāʿīlī position of a situation-specific self-articulation and reading of history. For the study of religions, as of Ismāʿīlism, a historical, systematic and descriptive method promises understanding without judgment. To quote Baird,

History is a temporal study. It attempts to locate religion in its cultural setting, and to reveal sequential connections. Furthermore, . . . [it] attempts to describe the human past accurately, not to pronounce about it.¹⁷

We will have occasion to note, however, that studies of Ismāʿīlism often favour the articulation of one of its manifestations or aspects over another. Even Ivanow, who promises to present his survey “without prejudice to their claims of priority,” passes several value judgments. And as noted above, while the concept of *imāmah* appears to imply an impartial attitude with respect to the past, in the actual verity of history, the Ismāʿīlī sect has experienced various social and political upheavals caused by conflicts over which interpretation or historical tradition represents “true” Ismāʿīlism. Indeed, modern Ismāʿīlism is once again poised at such a critical juncture where it must either

¹⁷ Baird, **Category** **Formation** (1971:33).



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integrate diverse identities, or else fracture into pieces once again. How much of its past traditions and communities it will succeed in holding together is yet to be seen.

Let us return, then, to the observation made at the beginning of this section, namely, that scholarship in Ismāʿīlī studies is unevenly distributed. In particular, why is it that Satpanth Ismāʿīlism (for which there is no want of primary sources) has not received sustained attention in scholarship on Ismāʿīlism?

This neglect is puzzling given the fact that Satpanth Ismāʿīlism spanned over seven centuries of Ismāʿīlī history, that is, over half the life of the Ismāʿīlī sect. Is it possible to appreciate the broader historical process called Ismāʿīlism without more fully understanding such a major portion of its history? Furthermore, is it possible to understand modern-day Ismāʿīlism without a more profound and detailed knowledge of this period in which the dominant body of the sect now has its roots? Despite answers to the contrary, it will be demonstrated that surveys of Ismāʿīlī history have either disregarded this tradition or significantly underplayed its role.

Critical Assessment of Surveys of Ismāʿīlism and Its History

To demonstrate the above claim, I will examine the place given to Satpanth Ismāʿīlism in a few key surveys of Ismāʿīlī history and literature. Specifically, the following works will be referred to, firstly, because their authors are specialists on the subject, and secondly, because the explicit purpose of their works is to present an overview of Ismāʿīlism. The surveys include Wladimir Ivanow's **Brief Survey of the Evolution of Ismailism** [1952]; an article co-authored by Aziz Esmail and Aziun Nanji titled "The Ismāʿīlīs in History" in **Ismāʿīlī Contributions to Islamic**



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Culture [1977];¹⁸ Wilferd Madelung's articles on "Ismā'īliyah" in the **Encyclopedia of Religion** [1986]; and finally, Farhad Daftary's recent volume, **The Ismā'īlis: Their History and Doctrines** [1990].

My purpose is to assess very briefly the place and treatment of Satpanth Ismā'ilism in these works. What significance do they attribute to Satpanth? Where do they position it in the broader development of Ismā'ilism? How much attention does it receive? Since it is not possible to go into each work in depth, I will focus on two topics to gain some perspective on these questions. The first is their schematization of Ismā'ilī history, and the second is their assessment of Satpanth Ismā'ilism.

In speaking of Ismā'ilī history, it is necessary to examine how these authors schematize its development as a whole in order to discern the criteria that they have used to distinguish among different periods or phases of Ismā'ilism. Schemes can reveal important information about what an author values as the defining aspects of a society or civilization. How authors choose to organize their study of a society and its past involve acts both of interpretation and assessment of its history. Often, assumptions by which materials are categorized are tacit or unconscious, and therefore, a careful look at such categories is necessary. The very decision to distinguish a period, and to give it a name indicates that an author has recognised it to be a distinctive and complex formation deserving focused study. Thus, in sketching the history of a sect, if an historian omits to specify a certain period, it may be fair to conclude that the period has not been estimated to be of enough significance to warrant such distinction.

18 Aziz Esmail and Azim Nanji, "The Ismā'īlis in History," *Ismā'ilī Contributions to Islamic Culture*, ed. S. H. Nasr (Tehran: Imperial Academy of Philosophy, 1977), 227–260.



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Thus, it is worth asking the basic question, how have scholars generally divided up the progression of Ismāʿīlī history? What have been the criteria undergirding their divisions? Have they determined the phases of Ismāʿīlī history according to languages and literatures, geographical and cultural groupings, major doctrines, sub-sects or a mixture of these? Where does Satpanth fit in their schemes? How is Satpanth connected to other periods or developments? What assumptions or biases, if any, do their schemes reveal? The purpose here is not to develop an ideal scheme but simply to examine what assumptions are implied by the schemes in use, and what these schemes reveal to us about an author's assessment of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism in the context of Ismāʿīlī history as a whole.

Ivanow

Beginning with the first work cited above, Ivanow in his **Brief Survey** [1952] says that the purpose of his book is to give a general overview of the evolution of Ismāʿīlism, and to help “the intending student of Ismailism to introduce some order or system into the material which he has to handle.”¹⁹ He attempts to introduce such an “order or system” by an articulation of its major phases. Accordingly, he divides the movement into the following five stages:

1. Incubation period (632–909 C.E.): “On which very little reliable information is available,” but which led to the establishment of the Fāṭimids in Egypt.
2. Fāṭimid period (909–1100 C.E.): “when the Ismaili movement and its literature attained their full development.”
3. Alamūt period (1100–1400 C.E.): “the period of life and death struggle, during which great concessions were made to popular tendencies.”

¹⁹ Ivanow, **Brief Survey** (1952: preface).



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4. Anjūdān period (1400–1600 C.E.): “a kind of renaissance . . . a revival of spirit and activity in the Persian Ismaili community.”
5. Modern period (1700–): “characterised by accelerated cultural advancement and re-orientation.”²⁰

According to Ivanow, the central goal of Ismāʿīlī history was to realise the theocratic ideal at the heart of the Shīʿī notion of *imāmah*, that is, governance of the *ummah* by God through the institution of imāmate. He asserts that this Shīʿī aspiration to assert the *imām*’s leadership of the *ummah* was a pragmatic and feasible program during the formative period of Islam. However, as early attempts of the Shīʿah to win the rights of their *imāms* to the caliphate repeatedly failed, a key Shīʿī theme emerged, namely, the concept of the *mahdī* or messiah *imām* who would rise to vindicate the Shīʿah and fill “the earth with equity and justice.”²¹

It is not necessary to go into the various historical details presented by Ivanow, but it should be noted that in his judgment, the climax of the Ismāʿīlī movement was attained during the Fāṭimid period when “the grand dream of a theocratic Islam might well have succeeded.”²² The rise of the Fāṭimids to power marked one of two moments in Ismāʿīlī history when the theocratic ideal was temporarily within grasp. (The second was the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī state). The reign of the Fāṭimids, moreover, was a success story not only in political terms; Fāṭimid patronage of trade, learning and culture forged a cultural hegemony that was to have a lasting impact on Islamic civilization. As a result of these achievements, this period is singled out by Ivanow to represent the peak of Ismāʿīlī history.

²⁰ Ibid., 29–30.

²¹ Ibid., 2.

²² Ibid., 16.



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For various reasons, the Fāṭimid venture ultimately failed. However, one of its beneficiary sub-groups, the Nizārīs, had established a foothold in northern Persia and had not given up the dream of an Ismāʿīlī state under the sovereignty of the *imām*. Spearheaded by Ḥasan ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ from the fortress of Alamūt, the Nizārīs succeeded by various means in rallying support for the Ismāʿīlī cause. They sustained a social and political struggle against the powerful Saljūqs for 160 years,

by the end of which there were all the signs of their having won the day
legalizing their position in the world of Islam. It was only the
overwhelming calamity of the Mongol invasion which swept them
away.²³

This was the second moment in their history when the Ismāʿīlīs may have succeeded in attaining their theocratic aspirations. However, the Mongol destruction of Alamūt in 1256 C.E. marked a turning point in Ismāʿīlī history, and for all practical purposes, Ivanow maintains that the Ismāʿīlī political program was put to rest. Thenceforth, he explains that Ismāʿīlism became passive, went underground, and forked into various, independent streams that developed their own local histories and traditions.

Undoubtedly, what furnishes the excitement of Ismāʿīlī history for Ivanow is the sect's repeated attempts to assert the political sovereignty of their *imām*. His narrative is driven by the sect's revolutionary enterprise, and this is the defining benchmark for assessing the course of Ismāʿīlī history. Given the importance placed on the sect's insurgent political career, which is interpreted as its *raison d'être*, it is natural that Ivanow pays greatest attention in his book to tracing the Fāṭimid and Alamūt periods. Furthermore, the Fāṭimid period is roundly praised for its military, economic, intellectual and cultural achievements.

²³ Ibid., 17.



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Esmail and Nanji

The article by Esmail and Nanji (1977) similarly highlights the eminence of the Fāṭimid period in Ismāʿīlī history. After reviewing the political successes of the Fāṭimids, the authors write, “It was, however, in the sphere of intellectual life that Fāṭimid achievement seems most brilliant and outstanding.”²⁴ Like Ivanow, the authors also divide their discussion of Ismāʿīlī history into five periods: the formative period; the period of Fāṭimid rule; the Ismāʿīlīs of Alamūt; the post-Alamūt period and the modern period. Their scheme is essentially the same as Ivanow's except that Esmail and Nanji's scheme subsumes Ivanow's Anjudān period under the post-Alamūt period. In their case, too, the criterion for distinguishing among various periods appears to be the political course of Ismāʿīlī history. Thus, both Ivanow and Esmail and Nanji employ the term “Alamūt” rather than the term “Nizārī” to refer to Ismāʿīlism in northern Iran before the Mongol invasion. Alamūt was a fortress and the central headquarters of the scattered Nizārī Ismāʿīlī cells of resistance in northern Iran. As a symbol of political power, “Alamūt” as the choice of the designation rather than “Nizārī” suggest that the milestones of Ismāʿīlī history are being set by the sect's political record.

Madelung

A look at the terminology used by Madelung in his article on “Ismāʿīliyah” (1986) to designate the major periods of Ismāʿīlism similarly reveals an emphasis on the political venture of Ismāʿīlism. Madelung's tripartite division of Ismāʿīlism into Pre-Fāṭimid, Fāṭimid and Post-Fāṭimid conveys the sense that the interest of Ismāʿīlī history essentially revolves around the Fāṭimid period. The prefixes pre- and post- convey the sense that Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism is to be taken as the central point in relation to which the

²⁴ Esmail and Nanji, “The Ismāʿīlīs” (1977:237).



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rest of Ismāʿilism is to be seen. While this may not have been intentional, Madelung's categorization upholds the Fāṭimid period as the heart and climax of Ismāʿilism. The very fact that one period is defined in relation to another indicates that its meaning is derived from that relationship, to which it is subordinate.

In this respect, Ivanow's scheme is conceptually sharper, since he uses names that uniquely identify different periods, and that acknowledge the specificity of each phase. Although in terms of theology, Ivanow judges the Fāṭimid phase more favourably than the rest, he insists consistently that each period be treated within its own historical context and not in comparison to something else. Madelung's scheme suggests, albeit unwittingly, that the yardstick for understanding Ismāʿilī history is the Fāṭimid period. This approach may foster analyses that regard the Fāṭimids as the normative centre of Ismāʿilism, and that would, accordingly, affect unfavorably the estimation of other periods.

Daftary

As the most recent discussion of the subject (1990), Daftary's study of Ismāʿilism is of special interest since, as he himself points out, modern strides in Ismāʿilī studies have at last made it "possible to convey an overall view of the evolution of Ismāʿilism."²⁵ Of all the authors discussed, Daftary shows slightly more self-awareness regarding the criteria he has used in order to draw distinctions among various phases of Ismāʿilī history. At any rate, he is the only one who offers a rationale for his scheme. He says that while it is difficult to select any specific order of phases in the history of Ismāʿilīs,

It is, however, possible on the basis of a mixture of chronological, doctrinal, geographical as well as literary and ethnological

²⁵ Daftary, *The Ismāʿilīs* (1990:xvi).



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considerations, to distinguish five phases, some running parallel to others.²⁶

He does not, however, demonstrate how he has used these criteria in his distinction among phases. In actual fact, his book treats Ismāʿilism strictly in terms of its chronological development, and, like the preceding works, is essentially an historical and political introduction to the Ismāʿilī sect, with significant discussions of the development of its major doctrines. His book, whose stated purpose is “to cover all the major phases and events in the development of Ismāʿilism,”²⁷ schematizes Ismāʿilī history as follows: Early Ismāʿilism (c. 700–900 C.E.); Fāṭimid Ismāʿilism (c. 900–1100 C.E.); Mustaʿlian Ismāʿilism (c. 1100–present); Nizārī Ismāʿilism of the Alamūt period (c. 1100–1256 C.E.); and Post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismāʿilism (c. 1250–present). In addition to the Nizārīs of Alamūt, Daftary also discusses at length the history of the Mustaʿlians, representing the two main streams of Ismāʿilism following the split after the Fāṭimid Imām, Mustanṣir biʾllāh (d. 1094 C.E.). Otherwise, his scheme repeats the same general pattern as those of Ivanow, and Esmail and Nanji, except that he adds the obscure period, Early post-Alamūt, to the Anjudān period, and the Modern period to the subdivisions of Post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismāʿilism. The following chart summarizes the schemes that have been introduced:

Schemes of Ismāʿilī history

C.E.	Ivanow	Esmail/Nanji	Madelung	Daftary
632–909	Incubation	Formative	Pre-Fāṭimid	Early Ismāʿilism
909–1094	Fāṭimid	Fāṭimid	Fāṭimid	Fāṭimid
1094–1256	Alamūt	Alamūt	Post-Fāṭimid	Nizārī / Mustaʿlian
1256–	↓	Post-Alamūt		Post-Alamūt: Early
1400–	Anjudān	↓		Anjudān
1800–	Modern	Modern	↓	Modern

²⁶ Ibid., 29.
²⁷ Ibid., xvi.



What do these schemes reveal? If the underlying basis for viewing Ismāʿīlī history is to sketch how the movement attempted to establish a theocratic state, then clearly, those phases that manifested such activity would receive the most attention. Indeed, this much is evident from the above chart. Two characteristics are common to all the above schemes: firstly, post-Alamūt Ismāʿīlism is more or less crammed into one major phase, and secondly, while this phase is the longest of Ismāʿīlī history, it receives the scantiest attention. That is, virtually seven centuries of Ismāʿīlī history remain undifferentiated and uncharted. The least attractive scheme is Madelung's tripartite division of Ismāʿīlī history because it heaps into one category the entire period from 1094 C.E. up to the present. The complex course of Ismāʿīlī history since the Fāṭimids is entirely missed by the label "post-Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism."

It is puzzling that despite the authors' demonstrated knowledge of the differentiation of Ismāʿīlism after the Nizārī–Mustaʿlī split (1094 C.E.) both in historical and in geographical terms, their schemes have failed to mark these off as distinctive phases and, by extension, of being worthy of individual and focused scholarly attention. All the authors *discuss* the discrete developments in Ismāʿīlī history that occurred following the split after Mustanṣir bi'llāh (d. 1094 C.E.), but they do not *schematize* them. Ironically, Ivanow's scheme, while the oldest of the four discussed, in using "Anjudān" rather than the more vague "post-Alamūt," reveals a much greater appreciation of the uniqueness of each period. It should further be observed that the period from the beginnings of Ismāʿīlism to the fall of Alamūt consistently received the greatest amount of attention, even in the more recent writings of Madelung and Daftary.



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Satpanth Ismāʿīlism: A Non-Existent Category?

What should have by now become conspicuous by its absence is the fact that despite their clear awareness of this tradition, not one of these authors specifies Satpanth Ismāʿīlism as a distinct phase or period in Ismāʿīlī history in his schemes. Even Ivanow, the first scholar to focus academic attention on Satpanth Ismāʿīlism with his substantial introduction to the subject,²⁸ does not mark off Satpanth as a distinctive phase preceding and running parallel to the Anjudān phase. All the authors ensconce Satpanth Ismāʿīlism under the “post-Alamūt” category, thus rendering it invisible. The schematic absence of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism as a distinctive phase in Ismāʿīlī history suggests to me that the role of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism in the context of Ismāʿīlī history as a whole has not been deemed to be of sufficient importance to merit such a separate designation. This is truly hard to grasp given the fact that not only is the Satpanth period one of the longest continuous phases in Ismāʿīlī history, but that it also constitutes the bedrock of contemporary Ismāʿīlism.

Having established the lack of place Satpanth has in the four schemes of Ismāʿīlī history discussed above, it now remains to deal with the second issue, namely, the authors' estimation of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism in the larger context of Ismāʿīlī history. Therefore, let us briefly turn our attention to how they treat the subject of Satpanth in their works.

²⁸ He accomplished this despite his handicap of not being able to consult the primary sources as he did not know the Indian languages. Cf. Ivanow, “Satpanth” (1948:1–54).



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Ivanow

In his **Brief Survey**, Ivanow devotes three pages to Ismāʿīlism in India.²⁹ It should be noted that in 1948, some four years before he published his **Brief Survey**, he had composed the full-length monograph on Satpanth mentioned above. Therefore, he was no stranger to the scope and influence of this tradition. Yet, surprisingly, he offers an unusually terse treatment of Satpanth in his **Brief Survey**.

Acknowledging that the “Indian Nizari Ismailis have a long history,”³⁰ he explains that Ismāʿīlism established itself in India by making use of doctrines that “formed a transition between Ismailism, Sufism and Hinduism.”³¹ This comment should be understood in the context of Ivanow’s opinion that after the Fāṭimid period, Ismāʿīlī doctrine deteriorated:

When the Fatimid organization collapsed, popular exuberant enthusiasm swept away the results of three long centuries of theological work, and the “Great Resurrection” in Alamūt sanctioned a new, popular version of Ismailism.³²

The reasoning that leads him to this conclusion is as follows. Drawing a distinction between religion in an urban versus a rural, agrarian setting, Ivanow maintains that during the middle period of the Islamic world (ninth to twelfth centuries), the more literate, educated part of society was concentrated in urban areas. By contrast, “in the vast tracts of rural and tribal territories such men [of learning] were very rare,”³³ and so the outlook of the peasant populations was generally narrow, unsophisticated and susceptible to superstitious beliefs.

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| 29 | Ivanow, Brief Survey | (1952:19–21). |
| 30 | <i>Ibid.</i> , 19. | |
| 31 | <i>Ibid.</i> , 20. | |
| 32 | <i>Ibid.</i> , 30. | |
| 33 | <i>Ibid.</i> , 1. | |



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Thus, following nineteenth century distinctions between rational–classical as opposed to superstitious–popular traditions, Ivanow appears to have shared the intellectual bias that philosophical religious texts are culturally superior to oral tradition, mythology and folklore. Accordingly, he draws notice to the dual nature of Ismāʿīlī philosophy, even in the Fāṭimid period, such as its “remarkable sobriety of tone and reasoning,” on the one hand, which co-existed with “speculations of the most fantastic kind,” on the other. He then traces these contrasts to the cleavage between town and village. “This contrast between the highest urban culture of the time and the illiteracy of the masses,” especially in the Fāṭimid times, explains the development of two parallel streams of speculation, that of the state-affiliated literati and that of the populists who mingled with simple folk.³⁴

To appreciate his judgment of “popular” Ismāʿīlism, it is worth noting his speculations on how these doctrines developed in their rural contexts. Ivanow asserts that while the uneducated “man in the village” would have had little interest in abstruse philosophy, his religious enthusiasm would surely have warmed to ideas that some extraordinary mysteries were being revealed to him. “What possibly fertilized for him such speculations was a variety of home-made simplifications and beliefs which could substantially modify the original doctrines.”³⁵ He further explains that these “home-made simplifications” were the work of the “small fry,” the rank and file Ismāʿīlī missionaries who, lacking the talent “to conceive and develop original and extensive schemes,”³⁶ instead made use of older, half-remembered religious ideas and infused them with Ismāʿīlī content. In other words, they created a potpourri of syncretic religious doctrines that succeeded in fueling popular religious sentiment.

34 Ibid., 34
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 35–36.



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In as much as it draws attention to the question of the influence of urban versus rural contexts on the development of two parallel streams of religious expression in Ismāʿīlism, Ivanow's analysis is important. A line of inquiry which pursues the hypothesis that class distinctions and the urban–rural dichotomy lie at the root of these divergent religious formulations may yield interesting results. That is, the distinctions between urban and rural, state-affiliated and proletarian, intellectual and emotional may be useful heuristic tools for understanding the “cultural dualism” in Ismāʿīlī doctrine. Unfortunately, however, Ivanow's low personal opinion of the culture of the masses adversely colours his otherwise insightful exposition, and limits his appreciation of the so-called populist's own idiom. A case in point is this explanation of the missionary's role as a purveyor of populist notions alongside philosophical Fāṭimid doctrines:

The rank and file Ismaili missionaries who were in direct contact with the masses probably experienced great difficulty in standing between these two opposed ideologies. . . . It is most probably for this reason, that we find concessions to popular belief in the works by less qualified authors.³⁷

Thus, while favouring the rational and systematic religious discourse of the Fāṭimids, Ivanow thought that the Nizārī period sanctioned “concessions” and a populist trend that inevitably led to syncretistic, impure doctrinal formulations. Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, which “indiscriminately” mixes Ṣūfī, Hindu and Ismāʿīlī ideas, is thus seen as the culmination of this process of deterioration in intellectual rigour. His scorn for the peasant mentality that he thinks nourished the Satpanth tradition is obvious in his skepticism regarding its literature's historical reliability:

This particularly applies to Satpanth with its Hinduistic basis. The Indian mind is notoriously unhistoric, and its polymeric and syncretic perception is aggravated by intense hyperbolism in expression.³⁸

³⁷ Ibid., 36.

³⁸ Ivanow, “Satpanth” (1948:3–4).



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Notwithstanding his judgment of the concessionary nature of the work of the Ismāʿīlī preachers, Ivanow concedes in the same monograph that the Ismāʿīlī *pīrs* of India solved “with remarkable tact and intuition” their challenge of “rendering the process of transition from Hinduism to Islam . . . as easy and smooth as possible.”³⁹ Despite their limited means, they were able to lay “the foundation of a new cultural group which in itself bore the seeds of further great progress.”⁴⁰ Having reached this affirmative conclusion, it is difficult to understand why Ivanow still failed to give due place to Satpanth in his **Brief Survey**. We can only speculate that his view of Satpanth as the last stage in the decline of Ismāʿīlī doctrines following the Fāṭimid period may be responsible for this disregard.

Madelung

Madelung devotes a mere column to Ismāʿīlism in the Indian subcontinent in his fourteen-page discussion of the “Ismailiyyah.” Apparently sharing the same view as Ivanow concerning the lack of theological substance or philosophical refinement in the Satpanth tradition, he briskly dismisses its literary heritage of *gināns* with the following remark:

They include hymns, religious and moral exhortation, and legendary history of the pīrs and their miracles, but contain no creed or theology. Islamic and Hindu beliefs, especially popular Tantric ones, are freely mixed. While idol worship is rejected, Hindu mythology is accepted.⁴¹

This somewhat premature judgment that disparate ideas have been “freely mixed” in the *gināns* has not been borne out by my own detailed analysis of two major works attributed to Pīr Shams, the *Garbīs* and the *Brahma Prakāśa*; on the contrary, at

³⁹ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Madelung, “Shiism,” (1986: 257).



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least in the case of these *gināns*, I have argued that the inter-mixture of Hindu and Islamic materials appears to have been deliberate and carefully conceived.⁴²

Esmail and Nanji

The stated purpose of Esmail and Nanji's article, which attempts to position Ismā'īlism within the broader context of Muslim history, is "to interpret the historical significance of the movement and the faith, highlighting its salient characteristics."⁴³ Based on the article's cursory remarks on Satpanth Ismā'īlism, one must conclude that Satpanth is, therefore, not 'salient.' Again, it is worth noting that this is yet another study that covers the first half of Ismā'īlī history in much greater detail than the second half. Two-thirds of the thirty-page article is devoted to the period leading up to the Mongol invasion (1256 C.E.), while Satpanth receives a meagre paragraph of comment. This study, too, portrays the Fāṭimid period as the most important and cultivated expression of Ismā'īlism.

What is striking about the omission of a substantial discussion of Satpanth Ismā'īlism in Esmail and Nanji's article is the fact that both authors wrote doctoral dissertations on the subject.⁴⁴ One might have expected that, as specialists on the subject, Esmail and Nanji would have been particularly keen to highlight the importance of this period to Ismā'īlī history, and accordingly, that they would have placed it squarely on the map of Ismā'īlī studies. Furthermore, unlike Ivanow who, as he himself confesses, was unable

42 See Kassam, "Syncretism" (Scholars Press: forthcoming); and "Syncretism or Synthesis: The Narrative *Gināns* of Pir Shams," unpublished paper presented in Boston at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, 1987.

43 Esmail and Nanji, "The Ismā'īlis" (1977:228).

44 Azim Nanji's dissertation was subsequently published as a book, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent* (New York: Caravan Books, 1978); Aziz Esmail, "Satpanth Ismailism and Modern Changes Within It: with special reference to East Africa" (University of Edinburgh: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1972).



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to consult the original Satpanth sources first-hand, Esmail and Nanji are intimately familiar with these materials. Why, then, this lapse?

One can only deduce that their decision sharply to limit their discussion of Satpanth was a deliberate one. If their purpose was to interpret Ismāʿīlism as “a strand in a larger complex” of *Islamic* history, it is possible that the authors may not have thought it appropriate to highlight Satpanth Ismāʿīlism given its deeply Hindu colouring. This stance may also be connected to current trends in the Ismāʿīlī sect to islamize and modernize its identity.⁴⁵ Their sensitivity to this issue is noticeable since what is truly conspicuous by its absence is any explicit reference to Hinduism in the only comment that the authors make about Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. It would thus appear that the authors wished to de-emphasize the pervasive influence of Hindu ideas in the development and elaboration of this phase of the Ismāʿīlī tradition:

The doctrines contained in the *ginān* literature constitute a markedly Nizārī and mystical vision of Islam. In addition, the cosmological myths and eschatological ideas prevalent in India were utilized by the pīrs in order to provide a locally intelligible expression to fundamental Ismāʿīlī principles.⁴⁶

The above statement also proclaims a seamless continuity between Nizārī and Satpanth ideas that is questionable. To what extent Satpanth Ismāʿīlism expresses or develops Nizārī doctrines in the same way that Nizārī ideas rose out of Fāṭimid concepts has yet to be determined. Similarly, the authors' stress on the mystical orientation of Satpanth as part of a general post-Alamūt trend may be debated:

⁴⁵ Cf. Ali S. Asani, “The Khojahs of Indo-Pakistan: The Quest for an Islamic Identity,” *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 8 No. 1 (1983) 31–41; Diamond Rattansi, “Islamization and the Khojah Ismāʿīlī Community of Pakistan” (McGill University: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1987); and Azim Nanji, “Sharīʿat and Ambiguity in South Asian Islam,” ed. Katherine P. Ewing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 63–76.

⁴⁶ Esmail and Nanji, “The Ismāʿīlīs” (1977:252).



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Henceforth, the individual search for inner, spiritual transformation received increasing emphasis in the articulation of the faith . . . In India, the Ginān literature exhibited the same quest for mystical illumination. . . and inner mastery.⁴⁷

The problem with this view is the implication that such a mystical, interior recognition of the *imām's* spiritual reality was a “new” post-Alamūt development in Ismāʿīlism. Surely Fāṭimid esotericism, which elaborates on ideas of the *bāṭin* and the revelation of the hidden mysteries of reality through contact with the *imām's* divine intellect, also manifests an inner orientation? To quote from their own article, Esmail and Nanji assert on Fāṭimid doctrine that “Man, by associating himself with the Imām, can seek salvation by participating in the cosmic ascent, reaching the Original Source.”⁴⁸ Also, while it may be true that mysticism is an important part of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, it is but one aspect of a rather complex religious worldview that includes a liturgical tradition, elaborate ritual practices, and an active agenda for social organization.

Daftary

Finally, let us turn our attention to Daftary's book on *The Ismāʿīlīs*. Following the preceding patterns, most of his massive work is devoted to Ismāʿīlism up to the fall of Alamūt. He covers the entire period from 1256 CE to the present in one chapter at the end of his book which is about one-fifth the book's total length. The reason given for this scant coverage is the lack of sufficient primary sources (which is certainly not true in the case of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism). Daftary repeatedly asserts that since Ismāʿīlism evolved under adverse conditions, the sect did not produce “any substantial volume of

47 Ibid., 254.

48 Ibid., 245.



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sectarian literature,” and thus has a “meagre literary heritage,”⁴⁹ with the Fātimid period being the major exception.

This assertion is confusing. It is not clear whether Daftary maintains that the Ismā‘īlīs lacked writers and thinkers, or whether Ismā‘īlī writings have been lost to us for various reasons. As is well known, with the destruction of Alamūt, the Ismā‘īlīs lost a good portion of their literature to the Mongols who ravaged their libraries. Sustained persecution of the sect over many centuries resulted early in a policy of keeping its literature secret (and in some cases, destroying it) for fear of discovery and consequent harm.

If indeed lack of materials was the real issue, however, it should be noted that while primary sources for the period Daftary calls “Early Ismā‘īlism” are scarce, nonetheless, he is able to devote a full fifty-page chapter to the subject. (This is half the size of his final chapter which covers the entire post-Alamūt period). Rather than the question being one of extant sources, perhaps the more crucial reason why Daftary does not have an adequate discussion of Ismā‘īlism after the thirteenth century is that these centuries of Ismā‘īlī history have not been as carefully studied as the preceding periods. Moreover, Daftary’s discussion of Satpanth Ismā‘īlism is so tenuous that it does not even reflect the progress, though slight, of the present state of scholarship on this phase. Since his book was published in 1990, this neglect is difficult to grasp.

We have already noted that Satpanth Ismā‘īlism is not represented in his scheme of Ismā‘īlī history. Given that his stated purpose is “to cover all the major phases and events in the development of Ismā‘īlism,” we must conclude that he, too, does not deem

⁴⁹ Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs* (1990:3).



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Satpanth to be a major phase. In his two-page summary of the major phases of Ismāʿīlī history at the beginning of his book, he identifies the last period as:

The post-Alamūt phase of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism, from the second half of the 7th/13th century to the present time. This covers three distinct periods; namely, the obscure early post-Alamūt, the so-called Anjudān, and the modern periods.⁵⁰

Beyond the general inadequacy of the category “post-Alamūt Nizārism,” what is notable is his complete omission of the Satpanth period in the description of this phase. In the same paragraph, he simply makes the vague comment, “Later, the Nizārīs achieved new successes in the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia,”⁵¹ but gives no indication of the long history and role of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism.

What is also perplexing is his use of the title “post-Alamūt Indian Nizārism” for Satpanth Ismāʿīlism despite his awareness that Ismāʿīlism in India was called Satpanth.⁵² There are two problems with this designation. Firstly, it suggests an unequivocal continuity between Nizārī and Satpanth Ismāʿīlism which, as we have mentioned before, may not be the case. It still remains to be seen whether, in fact, Nizārī ideas persisted in Satpanth in the manner suggested by the term “Indian Nizārism.” Secondly, by calling Satpanth Ismāʿīlism “Indian Nizārism,” its particularity in the context of Ismāʿīlī history and theology is compromised. Even a modest exposure to Satpanth literature reveals that Nizārī Ismāʿīlism and Satpanth Ismāʿīlism are distinctive in terms of their religious language and symbolism. To refer to Satpanth as “Indian Nizārism” is to suggest that Satpanth Ismāʿīlism is a smooth substitute for Alamūt Nizārism. This stance is not warranted.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 30.

⁵¹ Ibid., 31.

⁵² “Nizārism . . . in India became designated as Satpanth, that is Sat Panth, the True Path.” Ibid., 478.



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Having made two points, firstly, that Satpanth is incidental to Daftary's scheme of Ismā'īlī history, and secondly, that his designation of the tradition is inappropriate, a final issue remains, namely, his characterization of the Satpanth tradition. In his discussion of "Post-Alamūt Ismā'īlism," he says:

By contrast to the Ṭayyibīs, the literary output of the Nizārīs has always remained meagre. The difficult conditions under which the Nizārīs have often lived and the generally limited standard of literacy and intellectual accomplishment attained by the community until recent times made it almost impossible for the Nizārīs to produce outstanding theologians and authors comparable to the great Yamanī Ṭayyibī *dā'īs*.⁵³

In the same vein, he mentions that while the "Indian Nizārīs" developed their own distinctive literary heritage, the *gināns*, "they did not produce any elaborate theological or philosophical treatises nor did they translate the Persian and Arabic texts of other Nizārī communities into their own languages."⁵⁴ For one thing, this observation undoes his designation of Satpanth as "Indian Nizārism." Whereas the Indian Ṭayyibī *dā'īs* continued to develop a theological tradition inherited from their Yamanī ancestors, Daftary is correct in noting the virtually complete literary disjuncture (which means both linguistic and intellectual) in the Satpanth–Nizārī relationship. Secondly, he echoes the views of Ivanow and Madelung noted earlier, namely, that Satpanth Ismā'īlism fails to measure up to the "true" philosophical and theological form of Ismā'īlism. Daftary's view that the *ginān* tradition lacks a theology or philosophy is surprising in the context of his own assertion that, "Considerations of temporal and locational factors and peculiarities are, indeed, of utmost importance in any specific investigation of Ismā'īlism."⁵⁵

53 Ibid., 438.

54 Ibid., 442.

55 Ibid., 4.



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Now, the intriguing question remains, why has the history of scholarship in Ismāʿīlī studies moved in this uneven fashion? It is certainly an unexpected finding that these otherwise credible and valuable surveys of Ismāʿīlī history share a common disregard for the Satpanth phase. Why has scholarship in Ismāʿīlī studies been partial to certain areas? Before proceeding to assess the possible causes, it is important to emphasize that these observations are in no way meant to suggest that scholarly attention to Fāṭimid or Nizārī Ismāʿīlī history be curtailed. On the contrary, given the paucity of research on Shīʿism and Ismāʿīlism in general, scholarship on any aspect of these subjects is vital and significant. Rather, our main purpose is to draw attention to a problem *within* the field of Ismāʿīlī studies, and to point out that the latter has failed to address certain areas. In particular, we wish to underscore the neglect that prevails in the area of Satpanth Ismāʿīlī studies.

Reasons for the Neglect of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism

At this point, it is important to assess why Satpanth Ismāʿīlism has been neglected in the specialized field of Ismāʿīlī studies. As the preceding discussion has demonstrated, surveys of Ismāʿīlī history and doctrine tend to focus more on the period leading up to the thirteenth century as if no further significant developments took place in the sect thereafter. Why has this latter period, and specifically, the Satpanth tradition which was elaborated during it, been deemed to be a rather marginal part of the Ismāʿīlī movement? How can we explain the scholarly omission or dismissal of such a major period of Ismāʿīlī history?

At the outset, it was suggested that there may be a set of hidden assumptions that lies beneath the irregular course of Ismāʿīlī studies. The purpose of this section is to identify the assumptions that may be responsible for hindering a critical appreciation of the Satpanth tradition. I would like to suggest that an interpretive grid consisting of (at



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least) three conceptual co-ordinates has shaped the orientation of scholars towards their materials: orthodox versus heterodox, classical versus folk, and political versus religious.

Much has been recently written about the bias in scholarship, especially in Islamic studies, towards the so-called “higher” or classical expressions of Islamic civilization as against its local, folk or popular forms.⁵⁶ Older studies of folk Muslim practices and traditions for the most part manifest this superior and contemptuous attitude toward popular culture, which was perceived to be an aberration of a purer tradition for consumption by “commoners,” that is, those low in intellect but high in passion. The interest in popular culture as a genuine and vital social expression is a relatively recent development in Islamic scholarship, and has manifested itself under the rubric of Islamic expressions in local contexts. This renewed interest in local, vernacular Islamic formations (once pejoratively called “folk” Islam) has been positively influenced by the perspectives of cultural anthropology and the social sciences, and there now exists a range of valuable studies of indigenized, popular Islamic movements.⁵⁷

By and large, the agenda of Islamic studies, in common with other religious specializations that grew out of orientalist scholarship, has been dictated by the cultural productions of the so-called *ashrāf* (cultural élite), thus privileging the “great” traditions

⁵⁶ See especially Asim Roy's *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), and Dietmar Ruthmund, ed. *Islam in South Asia* (Weisbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1975).

⁵⁷ The most impressive work of this genre continues to be Clifford Geertz's *Islam Observed: Religious Developments in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). Also notable for a range of approaches are Richard Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Donald B. Cruise O'Brien & C. Coulon, eds., *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Robert W. Hefner, *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Katherine P. Ewing, ed., *Shari'at and Ambiguity in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); and Roy's *Islamic Syncretistic Tradition* (1984).



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over the “little” traditions of the *‘awāmm* or common folk. This situation is evidenced by the greater attention and volume of scholarship devoted to the classical heritage of Islam, undoubtedly a legacy of eighteenth and nineteenth century ideas that the “classical” was superior, and that “beginnings” embraced the essence of a tradition. These notions have since been criticized and revised, and modern scholarship on Islam, particularly under the influence of the history of religions' perspective, avoids such characterizations. Nevertheless, interpretations still exist that consider the classical, textual traditions of Islam as normative, and local Muslim traditions as aberrations.

It is important to note that this differential judgment of classical and folk not only exists in scholarship, but is also native to thinking within the Islamic tradition. Scholars often uncritically accept moral judgments made within Islamic communities regarding which Muslim traditions are sound and which are inferior. These internal valuations that label traditions as pure or distorted help to establish and define authority. By conferring legitimacy on certain traditions and rejecting others, specific interests are served and protected within a group's social system. In other words, claims of religious orthodoxy and authenticity are intimately connected with internal relations of power. In tacitly recommending such claims, scholarship may inadvertently collude with internal polemical voices that lay claims to truth and authority within specific religious groups.

The classical–folk dichotomy has had particularly negative implications for the study of Satpanth Ismā‘īlism. Given that Satpanth literature is written in Indian vernaculars and not in the classical languages of Islam, this fact automatically relegates it to a subordinate position under the categories of “folk,” “popular,” and “syncretic.” Unlike Turkish or Urdu, which enjoy greater prestige as semi-classical languages, the Indian dialects used in the *gināns*, whose form, style and symbolism are folkloric, are felt to be lesser vehicles for literary and intellectual expression. Further, the literature draws from several sources, which fact compromises its “purity.” Its mythical, didactic, and



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ritual content locate it centrally within the popular religious movements of India. As an oral and folk tradition, Satpanth Ismāʿīlism is thus easily dismissed as a “hodge-podge,” “superstitious” and, in any case, an “historically unreliable” tradition.

The classical versus folk dichotomy also creates a linguistic bias that has adversely affected scholarship on Ismāʿīlism (and Islam) in as much as Arabic and Persian sources have come to be regarded as the more sophisticated and authentic writings, whereas literatures in other languages are held to be of less consequence. It is this kind of linguistic bias that is transparent in Daftary's criticism that the Khojahs neither learnt nor attempted to translate their Fāṭimid or Nizārī heritage.⁵⁸ To judge as a shortcoming the fact that they did not learn Arabic bares the tacit assumption that Ismāʿīlī literatures in Arabic and Persian encompass the true and authentic source of Ismāʿīlī doctrines.

This is the kind of problem that emerges when one phase of Ismāʿīlī history is used as a yardstick for another. Such ahistorical comparison can and often has led to some difficult and fruitless conclusions. For instance, Ivanow stresses that the Fāṭimid philosopher-*dāʿī* was intellectually and morally superior to the Satpanth's miracle-working *pīr*; and both Madelung and Daftary claim that the *gināns* are devoid of cosmological or theological doctrines so amply found in Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism. By conceding a special position to the urbane textual and intellectual achievements of Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism, these scholars are inevitably led to such types of assertions. The question has been raised earlier whether or not such commendation and judgment properly belong to historical scholarship dealing with religious materials.

Also linked to the classical-folk dichotomy are assumptions concerning what is orthodox and heterodox within Ismāʿīlism. As in the larger Islamic context, so in the

⁵⁸ Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:442, n. 17).



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Ismāʿīlī context, whatever departs from the Arabo-Persian norm inadvertently adds up to heterodoxy. This would appear to be a particularly suitable judgment of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlī tradition given its strong Hindu content. For, what could be farther from the strict iconoclasm of orthodox Islam than friendly cohabitation with the iconicity of Hinduism? From this perspective, an Islamic sect with such deep Hindu influences must by definition be held in contempt as heterodox, syncretic and deviant.

Accordingly, to explain the somewhat awkward existence of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, Ismāʿīlī scholars have regularly interpreted it to have been an expedient (thus temporary) means of conversion. That is, Satpanth was a suitable and necessary aberration tolerated for the purpose of conversion. While it may well be true that conversion was an important factor in the formation of Satpanth, the problem with this interpretation is that it deprives the tradition of its religious authenticity. To interpret Satpanth mainly as a clever conversion strategy is to take away from it the religious meaning and social implications it has held for those who have practiced it for some seven centuries. Precisely such analysis has provided justification for the neglect of Satpanth studies within the sect's own research institutions. In the last decade, it has become increasingly difficult for scholars both within and outside the Ismāʿīlī community to gain access to Satpanth Ismāʿīlī materials. This trend can be predicted to continue given the sect's contemporary interest in locating and asserting its identity more centrally within the larger Muslim *ummah*.

Also key to the orthodox versus heterodox problem is the question of power. To what extent does the political success of the Fāṭimids add emphasis to the assertion that their literature was “classical,” their doctrines “orthodox,” and their culture the “florescence” of Ismāʿīlism? How much of the prestige of the latter derives from the political achievements of the Fāṭimid period? As we have seen, scholars have repeatedly emphasized the political ambitions of the Ismāʿīlīs, since the birth of Shīʿism was



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intimately tied to the question of authority and leadership over the Muslim *ummah*. In this light, the Shīʿah have often been depicted as a sect focused on revolt, revolution and the subversion of Sunnī orthodoxy. This characterization is even more emphatically applied to the Ismāʿīlīs who tenaciously held on to their ambitions to secure the claims of the imāmate. Therefore, perhaps it should not be surprising that the highest point of Ismāʿīlī history has been identified with those moments when the sect was politically successful.

The determination of the key phases of Ismāʿīlī history according to the political fortunes of the Ismāʿīlī sect becomes transferred, with unfortunate consequences, on to the broader developments within the sect, including its literature and thought. Hence, the doctrinal development of the sect is shown to follow a course parallel to the rise and fall of Ismāʿīlī power. Furthermore, since the appeal of Ismāʿīlī history lies primarily in those periods when it came closest to attaining a theocratic ideal, periods when the sect was politically dormant have drawn less attention. Thus, scholarly emphasis on the political aspects of Ismāʿīlism may help to explain the predominance of research on Fāṭimid and Nizārī Ismāʿīlism and the comparative neglect of the seemingly more quiescent phases such as Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. Undoubtedly, such a focus on the political career of the Ismāʿīlī movement has compromised a deeper appreciation of its religious history. It is worth asking whether these surveys of Ismāʿīlism would have ended so abruptly in the thirteenth century had their schemes been determined not by the fluctuations of Ismāʿīlī rule, but by the changing shape of its religious doctrines.

These, then, are some key hidden assumptions that may have contributed to setting the agenda for Ismāʿīlī studies. It seems that Satpanth Ismāʿīlism has been marginal because (a) it is a *popular* Islamic tradition, (b) it is *heterodox* within Ismāʿīlism, and (c) it seems to be of little *political* interest. All this has made it appear to be more or less



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inconsequential to the larger picture of Ismā'īlī history, and hence, undeserving of sustained and carefully focused scholarly attention.



CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

***Gināns* in the Courts: Beginnings of an Historical Study of Satpanth**

The historical study of the *ginān* literature began in the present so-called modern period of Ismā‘īlism. The beginning of this phase is marked by the transference of the residence of Āghā Khān I, the 46th Imām, Ḥasan ‘Alī Shāh, from Iran to India in 1845 C.E. The *imām’s* move brought to a head tensions within the Khojah community that led to three major court battles: the Sarjun Mīr case in 1848 C.E.; the Khojah case in 1866 C.E.; and the Hājī Bibī case in 1908 C.E. A scrutiny of these cases reveals that three interconnected issues were at stake: what precisely was (a) the extent of the *imām’s* religious authority, (b) the religious identity of the Khojah sect, and (c) the status of the *gināns*? These cases are significant to Satpanth Ismā‘īlī studies because the court’s judgment was to rest on investigations concerning the origins and history of the Khojah sect. The specific circumstances of the cases, the evidence used in defense of opposing positions, and, most critically, the judgment rendered by the justices all played a vital role in shaping subsequent attitudes and interpretations of Satpanth Ismā‘īlism.

Thus, a brief review of the cases is necessary. Well before Āghā Khān I arrived in Bombay, there was internal dissent within the Satpanth Khojah community. As early as 1829 C.E., a Khojah by the name of Habib Ibrahim refused to submit to the *imām*



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the customary tithe called *dasond*, and challenged the latter's rights to receive such dues. The *imām* dispatched an emissary, Mirza Abdool Cassim, with his maternal grandmother, Mari Bibi, who visited him following in Bombay and who vigorously defended the *imām's* rights to these religious dues. Unrelenting, Ibrahim along with his partisans who numbered twelve—hence, they were called the *Bārbhāī* or twelve brothers—were excommunicated in 1830 C.E. However, five years later they were readmitted upon promise that they would pay their arrears in *dasond* and accept the *imām's* religious authority as final.

In 1846 C.E., the *imām* moved his headquarters (*darkhānah*) to India, and while he was briefly in Calcutta for two years, yet another quarrel arose. This time it concerned the inheritance rights of Khojah women, and the dispute led to the Sarjun Mīr Case in 1847 C.E. The Āghā Khān supported the Khojah women's right to inherit property as prescribed in the Qur'ān, while his opponents insisted on maintaining current practice among the Khojahs that followed the more conservative Hindu rights of female inheritance. Judge Erskine Perry ruled against the *imām* and in favour of the *Bārbhāī* Khojahs who advocated the Hindu inheritance codes. The judge was clearly exasperated by the Khojahs' obscure sense of their history and religious identity, and this perhaps moved him to rule in favour of prevalent customary practice. He says:

Although they call themselves Musalmans, they evidently know but little of their prophet and Quran. . . . To use the words of one of themselves, they call themselves Shī'īs to a Shī'ī, Sunnīs to a Sunnī, and they probably neither know nor care anything as to the distinctive doctrine of either of the great divisions of the Musalman world.¹

Clearly, the Khojahs' muddled sense of religious identity was a problem for the British courts in India who, without sufficient clarity as to their specific denomination, were at

¹ Syed Mujtaba Ali, *The Origin of the Khojāhs and their Religious Life Today* (Würzburg: Buchdruckerei Richard Mayr, 1936), 51.



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a loss to determine which claims of traditional religious authority applied. Recognizing this fact, Āghā Khān I set into motion a long-term process of reform, modernization and change among the Khojah Ismāʿīlīs and took several strong measures to

crystallize the identity of the Khojah Ismāʿīlīs. He eliminated certain prevailing Hindu customs, such as the observance of the Hindu Law of inheritance, and some Sunnī burial and marriage customs.²

In 1861 C.E., he even published a letter declaring his desire that the Khojahs embrace openly the Shīʿah Imāmī creed of his ancestors. Since religious freedom was protected under British law, he proclaimed that it was no longer necessary for his Khojah Ismāʿīlī followers to retain those religious practices that had hitherto helped them to conceal their identity. That is, it was no longer necessary to practice *taqīyah* by observing foreign and non-essential religious rites. Specifically, he directed the Khojahs to stop performing marriage ceremonies, funeral rites, and ablutions in Sunnī or Hindu form and to bring them into line with general Shīʿī practices. The letter was circulated among his followers who were required to sign it in order to confirm their allegiance to him and their acceptance of his wishes.

However, the first Āghā Khān's attempts to focus, and thus consolidate, the Khojah's identity as a Shīʿah Ismāʿīlī sect by reforming the religious and social practices of his Khojah followers met immediately with strong resistance, and older antagonisms resurfaced. The Bārbhāīs, this time headed by Ibrahim's son, Ahmed Hubibhoy, again raised their voices in dissent and refused to pay the Āghā Khān I any religious dues. Asserting that the Khojahs were, in fact, Sunnī Muslims since the time of their conversion to Islam, they argued that, therefore, the Shīʿah *imām* had no rights to their dues, which they had been submitting not as tithes, but as charitable donations for the

² Diamond Rattansi, "Islamization and the Khojah Ismāʿīlī Community of Pakistan" (McGill University: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1987), 16.



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welfare of the community. Accordingly, it was up to community elders to decide how these funds were to be administered. It followed, they maintained, that the Āghā Khān's control over Khojah funds and properties was in fact illegal. Since the Khojahs were Sunnīs who did not accept the claims of the Shī'ah *imām*, he was entitled neither to Khojah monies nor to any preordained authority over the regulation of their customs and ceremonies. Thus, the Bārbhāī filed suit demanding that

the Imam may be restrained from interfering in the management of the trust property and affairs of the Khoja community or in the election and appointment of the Mukhi Kamadhias, from excommunicating any Khojas or depriving them of the various privileges appertaining to membership; from celebrating marriages in the Jamatkhana; from demanding or receiving from any Khoja any oblation, cess, offerings etc. in the alleged spiritual or temporal capacity.³

This case hinged on one crucial question: what exactly was the religious identity of the Khojahs since their origin? Both sides agreed that the Khojahs had been converted by Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn from Hinduism to Islam. The Bārbhāīs, however, claimed that Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn was a Sunnī and had converted the Khojahs to Sunnī Islam. The Āghā Khān I, on the other hand, claimed that the Pīr was an Ismā'īlī *dā'ī* who had converted them to Shī'ah Ismā'īlism, and that from the beginning, the Khojahs had professed allegiance to the hereditary Shī'ah *imām*. The resolution of the case pivoted on determining whether the Khojahs were Sunnī or Shī'ah Muslims.

It was in this context that the *ginān* tradition of the Satpanth Ismā'īlīs was catapulted into public attention. In 1866 C.E., specific *gināns* were presented as evidence in the British High Court of Bombay to defend the hereditary rights of the *imām* over his Khojah community. In what became famously known as the Khojah Case, the Judge,

³ "The Khoja Case 1866—A Paraphrase." Typewritten manuscript (Ismailia Association, Quebec, n.d.)



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Sir Joseph Arnould, ruled in favour of the *imām*, having concluded that the Khojahs were:

A sect of people whose ancestors were Hindus in origin, which was converted to and has throughout abided in the faith of the Shī'ah Imāmi Ismā'ilīs and which has always been and still is bound by ties of spiritual allegiance to the hereditary Imāms of the Ismā'ilīs.⁴

The fact that a specimen from Satpanth literature was admitted in court as authoritative evidence to defend the *imām's* claims is in itself remarkable. Justice Arnould considered it seminal to his verdict to determine historical questions such as who were the Shī'ah as distinct from the Sunnīs, who was the Āghā Khān, and what was the Khojahs' relationship to the Āghā Khān. Representing the sacred literature of the Khojahs, the *gināns* were used to demonstrate that the Khojahs had indeed venerated the Āghā Khān's ancestors for centuries.

The third court case called the Hājī Bībī Case was filed some four decades later in 1908 C.E. against Āghā Khān III, Sir Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, by his first cousin, Hājī Bībī, daughter of his uncle, Jungi Shāh. She and her supporters, mainly composed of members from the Āghā Khān's extended family, asserted that they had equal rights over the religious offerings made to the Āghā Khān. They claimed that the tributes paid to Āghā Khān III by his followers were meant to provide for the needs of his relatives who had joint title over his estate and properties. They also claimed that since the time of their conversion, the Khojahs had been Ithnā 'Asharīs, and not Ismā'ilīs.

Now it is interesting to note that in every instance, control over property and religious dues was at the root of the disputes. Even in the case of the inheritance rights of Khojah women, the problem was wealth and, accordingly, the status and power that it

⁴ Asaf 'Ali Asghar Fyzee, *Cases in the Muhammadan Law of India and Pakistan* (London: Clarendon Press, 1965), 545.



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gives. To solve the problem of who had the authority to enjoy or decide the use of these assets, it first had to be determined who was their rightful owner. As the property under discussion was of a religious nature, the court also had to ascertain the purpose of the religious dues.

What is interesting is how, depending on the claims being made, the litigators asserted that the Khojahs were in actual fact Hindus (to circumvent Muslim laws of female inheritance), Sunnīs (to obtain communal management of religious dues) or Ithnā ʿAsharīs (to gain joint ownership of the Āghā Khān's estate). What made these disputes possible in the first place, then, must have been a major case of identity-crisis among the Khojahs. Justice Perry had already noted skeptically that the Khojahs were vexingly oblivious of their history and equally oblivious of their rather polymorphous religious identity. Were the Khojahs, in fact, Sunnī or Shīʿah, Ismāʿīlī or Ithnā ʿAsharī, Hindu or Muslim? Obviously, this was not merely a speculative interest, but would have immediate consequences for the various property claims. For the Āghā Khān III, the response to this question must have been crucial. If the judgement was ruled in his favour, certainly, it would resolve his property rights; but more importantly, it would give legal endorsement to his religious status and authority both within his community *and* in the outside world. The ruling would also stamp the Khojahs as a Shīʿah Muslim sect that follows a head of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs of Persia.

Two points that emerged from the court's historical investigations are worth noting. Firstly, it was observed that the sect had routinely enjoined and practiced *taqīyah* or religious concealment as a precautionary measure against persecution. Since the Sunnīs viewed the religious doctrines of the Ismāʿīlīs as heresy as well as treason against the Sunnī state, the court noted that Ismāʿīlīs had long adopted a policy of practicing their faith in secrecy. This often meant adopting non-Ismāʿīlī practices as a façade.



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Secondly, the court described the sect's traditional method of conversion as a process of religious accomodation. The Ismā'īlī missionaries sought

to make converts by assuming to a great extent the religious standpoint of the person whom they desired to convert, modestly hinting a few doubts and difficulties and then, by degrees, suggesting as the only possible solution of these the peculiar tenets of their own system.⁵

That is, the court explained that the Ismā'īlī *pīrs* had been trained to convert through religious tolerance, gentle persuasion, and gradual indoctrination. Using a peaceful, subtle, and somewhat insidious approach, first they won the confidence of potential converts or supporters of their cause by conceding the truth of their religious tenets, and then, gradually led them to see how these tenets were imperfect or false. Elsewhere, I have illustrated this selective strategy of partial acceptance and rejection in the formulation of Satpanth Ismā'ilism.⁶

After recovering a sketchy historical background of the Nizārī *da'wah's* activity in India, the court still had to determine whether Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn was a Sunnī or a Shī'ite. According to traditional accounts that prevailed among the majority of the Khojahs, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn had been sent from Khurāsān by the Nizārī *imām*, Islām Shāh (d. ca. 1480), and had converted many Hindus to Ismā'ilism whom he gave the title Khojah (from the Persian *kwājah* for lord, master).⁷ The minority Khojah faction maintained otherwise, namely, that Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn was a Sunnī and converted the Hindus to Sunnī Islam. Three points were advanced in support of the first position. First, if Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn was a Sunnī, instead of performing pilgrimages and making homage to the Āghā Khān and his ancestors, why did the Khojahs not venerate Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn at his shrine

⁵ "The Khoja Case" (n.d.:10).

⁶ Kassam, "Syncretism" (Scholars Press: forthcoming); "Syncretism or Synthesis" (AAR 1987: unpublished presentation).

⁷ Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition* (1978:94).



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in Ucch? Second, if the Pīr had indeed preached a Sunnī form of Islam, why was there substantial evidence that the Khojahs had been submitting tithes and religious offerings to the Āghā Khān's ancestors for generations? Third, and most decisively, how could the *ginān Das Avatār*, considered to be the most sacred poem of the Khojah scriptures, have been composed by a Sunnī given its contents? Surely, therefore, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn could not have been a Sunnī.

The court first established the fact that the *Das Avatār* was part of the ancient religious literature of the Khojahs and was regularly recited in their prayer assemblies throughout the region. Composed of ten parts, the last section of the work, which identified the first Shīʿite Imām ʿAlī as the awaited tenth *avatār*, was held in great awe and was routinely recited at the death bed of the Khojahs. If Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn had composed this *ginān* and introduced it among the Khojahs as a great religious work—and its importance had been established by its universal use and reverence among the Khojahs—then, its tenets might reveal the true religious identity of the Khojahs when he converted them. Citing the *Das Avatār*, Justice Arnold explains as follows how the Hindus were converted by the *pīrs* of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah*:

What is Dasavatar? It is a treatise in 10 chapters containing (as, indeed, its name imports) the account of ten avatars or incarnations of the Hindu God Vishnu; the tenth chapter treats of the incarnation of the Most Holy Ali . . . it is precisely such a book as a Dai or missionary of the Ismailis would compose or adapt if he wished to convert a body of not very learned Hindus to the Ismaili faith. It precisely carries out . . . the standing instructions to the Dai . . . viz, to procure conversion by assuming, as in great part true, the religious standpoint of the intended convert. This is exactly what the book does: It assumes the nine incarnations of Vishnu to be true as far as they go, but not the whole truth, and then supplements the imperfect Vishnuvite system by superadding the cardinal doctrine of the Ismailis, the incarnation and coming manifestation (or Avatar) of the 'Most Holy' Ali. ⁸

⁸ Fyzee, *Cases* (1965:504–5).



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Hence, he ruled that based on the authority of the *ginān* literature, the Āghā Khān was the true spiritual head and hereditary *imām* of the Ismā‘īlī Khojahs, who were a sect of converted Hindus. As for the existence of Hindu, Sunnī and Ithnā ‘Asharī practices among the Khojahs, he accounted for them thus:

The Khojas have observed these practices . . . out of Takiyah – concealment of their own religious views and adoption of alien religious ceremonies out of dread of persecution for religion’s sake.⁹

That the authority of the *gināns* should thus be invoked in defense of the *imām*’s legitimacy is noteworthy and yet also ironic. For while the *ginān* tradition helped establish in an official public and legal British setting that the Satpanth Khojahs were Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs, the actual ambivalence of the sect’s religious identity was not to be removed by this ruling. In due course, the same sacred tradition that had been invoked by the British court of law to establish that the Khojahs were Shī‘ah Imāmī Ismā‘īlī Muslims was later cited by Sunnī Muslims to repudiate that the Satpanth Khojahs were Muslims at all, given the Hindu nature of their *ginān* literature! The public and legal recognition of the *gināns* as an authoritative source for confirming the sect’s identity further endorsed and reinforced the tradition’s status within the community; but through its very exposure, the *ginān* tradition had become vulnerable to attack by hardline Muslims who found its Hindu–Muslim mixture totally unacceptable. The public display of Satpanth literature was thus a mixed blessing, and contributed, in its turn, to a process of the islamization of the Satpanth Ismā‘īlīs which continues today.

It is essential to underline that British law, under which religious rights and freedoms were protected, had made the exposure of this carefully guarded literature possible in the first place. After long centuries of secrecy, such a policy had permitted the

⁹ Ibid., 539.



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Ismā'īlīs the freedom to reveal and publish their literature without fears of recrimination and persecution. Conversely, if British rule promised protection and the legitimacy of their long-cherished tradition, absence of the latter could reintroduce age-old fears. Indeed, the independence movement with the birth of Pakistan and India was marked by intense Hindu–Muslim strife and conflict. The eventual assertion of a strictly orthodox Islamic identity in the state of Pakistan rekindled the fear and threat of persecution half a century later among the Khojah Ismā'īlīs.¹⁰

This discussion of the emergence of the *ginān* tradition into public view and the subsequent scholarly discourses on it is intended to show how from the very beginning of its exposure, assessments of the *ginān* tradition have not been free from political and social ramifications. Public discussions of the Satpanth tradition have been fraught with tension and competing vested interests. The uncertain and motley nature of the tradition itself has augmented this state of affairs. This being the case, approaches to and interpretations of the tradition have invariably been affected by context. Meanwhile, within the sect itself, a quest for its religious identity continues, and this has dictated its attitudes towards the traditions of its past.¹¹

Review and Assessment of the Scholarship on the *Gināns*

Having described the environment that gave birth to Satpanth studies, we now turn to a review of the scholarly literature on the subject. This review is limited to those studies

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of the consequences of islamization on the *ginān* tradition and the Khojahs of Pakistan, see Rattansi, "Islamization and the Khojah" (1987).

¹¹ Rattansi (1987) and Asani (1983) discuss the difficulties created by the Satpanth literature in recent history as the sect attempts to reassert its Islamic heritage. Rattansi's work is particularly important for its exposition of the conflict and ambiguity that currently surrounds the *ginān* tradition within the modern Khojah Ismā'īlī community.



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that focus specifically on the *gīnān* tradition. It should be noted that there are studies that discuss Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, but are not strictly focused on the *gīnān* literature. These works, which include studies such as Aziz Esmail's 1972 dissertation on "Satpanth Ismailism and Modern Changes within it" (Edinburgh), and more recently, Diamond Rattansi's 1987 dissertation, "Islamization and the Khojah Ismāʿīlī community in Pakistan" (McGill) are not reviewed here.¹² In this section, I will concentrate mainly on studies that have advanced the study of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism through translations and analyses of its sacred literature or through expositions and interpretations based on these primary sources. It should further be noted that this review excludes various sectarian sources on the *gīnāns* that exist in Gujarati or Urdu.¹³

Ivanow

The first significant study of Satpanth materials was contributed by the Russian Islamicist, Wladimir Ivanow in *Collectanea* published by the Ismaili Society of Bombay in 1946. What has distinguished Ivanow's work on Ismāʿīlism in general is his reliance on Ismāʿīlī literature rather than external sources as the basis of his exposition of the sect's history and doctrines. He has made an impressive number of translations of Perso-Arabic Ismāʿīlī works. Despite his lack of familiarity with Indian languages, Ivanow pressed on to understand Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. To draw the attention of scholars to this tradition, he surmounted his difficulty by securing the help of a Khojah specialist, V. N. Hooda, to translate select works from the *gīnān* corpus.

¹² Unfortunately, several attempts to obtain Aziz Esmail's dissertation have failed.
¹³ For instance, A. J. Chunara, *Noorun Mubīn* (Bombay: Ismailia Association for India, 1951); Narayanji Contractor, *Pirāṇa Satpanth ni Pol* (Ahmedabad: Published by author, 1925); Sachedina Nanjiani, *Khojā Vratant* (Ahmedabad: 1918).



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Ivanow composed his monograph “Satpanth” in *Collectanea* based on these works, which he also published in the same volume under the title, “Some specimens of Satpanth literature.” He notes that this was the first time in academe that “specimens of the so far completely unknown” *ginān* literature had been published and made available in translation for scholarly study.¹⁴

Admitting that the translated selection of *gināns* formed but “a small portion of the whole Satpanth literature,” he felt, nevertheless, that they supplied “sufficient materials to permit us to assess its general outlines and arrive at some conclusions.”¹⁵ His aim, therefore, was to sketch the main characteristics of Satpanth. But while he modestly insists that his work was no more than “notes helping to approach the specimens which have been translated,” his little monograph went much farther. In fact, it offered a succinct and often illuminating introduction to Satpanth Ismā‘īlism based on its own religious heritage. Moreover, his wider knowledge of the history and doctrines of the Ismā‘īlī movement perceptibly enhanced his approach to and interpretation of Satpanth.

It is likely that Ivanow had at his disposal many more translations than were actually published in *Collectanea*. At any rate, the following specimens were translated by Hooda: three works attributed to Pīr Shams including his *Garbīs*, miracle stories and a poem on fourteen golden rules (lit. jewels); two works attributed to Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn called *Das Avatār* and *So Kriyā*; *Jannatpurī* attributed to Imām Shāh; and a selection of shorter *gināns* by various *pīrs*. It should be noted that Ivanow’s discussion draws not only on these fairly extensive translations but also on his own field work and interviews with Khojahs on the meaning of Satpanth materials. In this respect, his work is an important record of opinions and oral traditions in circulation at his time.

¹⁴ Ivanow, “Satpanth” (1948:3).

¹⁵ Ibid.



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In many ways, Ivanow's study set the framework and agenda for *ginān* scholarship, and so, an assessment of his work is necessary. He divides his monograph on Satpanth into four sections: notes on its history, propaganda, doctrines and literature. Locating the tradition within the broader context of Hindu–Muslim interaction in the Indian subcontinent, Ivanow notes that the Satpanth tradition is not unlike other sects that strove for Hindu–Muslim synthesis, for instance, the Pañj-pīriyā, and the Sikh. He also notes that it was the willingness of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* or religious mission to do trade, as it were, at a religious and cultural level, that marked its success in the subcontinent. His explanation of the *daʿwah's* method has become standard. Observing that the greatest impediment to the success of orthodox Islam “was connected with its conservatism of forms,” he goes on to explain the success of the Ismāʿīlī preaching as follows:

Either by intuition, or sound and clever reasoning, the Nizari Ismaili missionaries devised . . . methods depending on two principles. One was their bold tactics in separating the meaning and spirit of Islam from its hard Arabic shell. The other was their concentration of efforts on a few definite castes.¹⁶

The first principle permitted them the latitude to explain “the high ideals of Islam in the familiar terms of the ancestral religion and culture of the new converts,”¹⁷ which, in the case of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs, was mainly Hinduism. The Ismāʿīlī preachers or *pīrs* were deliberately to facilitate the transmission of Islam to Hindus, and their work, as captured in or expressed by the *ginān* tradition,

constituted the bridge between Ismailism and Hinduism which permitted the new ideas to enter that entirely different world of Hindu mentality.¹⁸

16 Ibid., 21.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., 22.



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This analysis of Ismāʿīlī proselytization in the Indian subcontinent has had interesting consequences for the interpretation of Satpanth literature. Firstly, it has helped to make intelligible the syncretic nature of the *gināns* and offers a reasonable explanation for why an Islamic sect came to possess a religious literature that was not only in the Indian vernacular, but also thoroughly permeated by Indian religious and cultural symbols. Secondly, it opened up the hermeneutic exercise of seeking for homologues and modes by which Islamic, specifically Ismāʿīlī, ideas had been transmitted or translated through Indian religious concepts. In other words, his work led to the practice of locating those crosspoints between the two traditions that would permit such rapprochement.

For example, Ivanow draws the analogy that just as in the Qurʾān Islam is proclaimed as the completion and perfection of God's revelation to the people of the book (*ahl al-kitāb*), so also in the *gināns*, Satpanth is portrayed as the final and crowning stage of the Hindu religion. This is done by identifying the first Shīʿite *imām* ʿAlī as the promised tenth *avatār* of Viṣṇu. He says,

In this theory, Hinduism was merely a preparatory phase, just as Christianity, Judaism, etc., [were] in the revelation of the only True Religion, Satpanth.¹⁹

While the above interpretation offers a solution for comprehending the plentiful elements of Indian religions in Satpanth literature, Ivanow had much less success with appreciating other aspects of this tradition. This can be observed in his sections on Satpanth history and doctrine where he assesses his primary sources, the *gināns*, and finds them to be deficient on several counts. Noting that "Satpanth literature can be defined as popular," many of his problematic remarks can be traced to his generally poor estimate of folk religious traditions. In particular, two are worth mentioning. The

¹⁹ Ibid., 24.



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first pertains to his assessment of Satpanth materials as a source for its past. Ivanow dismisses as utterly useless the hagiographic and legendary accounts preserved in the *ginān* tradition. He judges such traditions, which may be oral in origin, to be spurious and essentially unreliable, and thus, of little or no historical utility. Considering these tales to be pious edifications, he concludes, “we may therefore legitimately relegate these details to the sphere of the miraculous.”²⁰ While skepticism with respect to the historical precision of traditional accounts preserved in the *gināns* is justified, Ivanow’s total dismissal of them is unjustified. It precludes prematurely the weighing of testimony preserved in oral traditions and sacred biographies that may yield insights for the historian concerning the emergence and development of Satpanth.

Secondly, having observed that the *ginān* literature consists mainly of devotional hymns, moral advice and admonitions, religious myths, legends and miracles, Ivanow criticizes the tradition for having little by way of “theological study” or “religious dogma.”²¹ As a brew of religious ideas drawn from various sources including Tantrism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śūfism and Nizārī Ismā‘īlism, Satpanth is considered to be essentially a doctrinal hodgepodge. Hence, in his section on its doctrine, he says:

Satpanth, it seems, does not possess a properly formulated creed, or even a formula for the profession of a religion. It seems that its dogmatic principles have never been elaborated or systemized. The *gnans* [*sic*] contain a profusion of exhortations to piety, offering of prayers, paying the *dasondh* or tithe, but it seems that all this has never been properly arranged in a systematic way.²²

The problem of interpretation here is similar to the one of how legends and miracles in the *gināns* are to be assessed. Although Ivanow was able to grasp the utility of Indian religious symbolism in the content of the *ginān* tradition, he was perhaps unable to

²⁰ Ibid., 10.

²¹ Ibid., 40, 33.

²² Ibid., 30–31.



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discern that its folkloric form and imagination may also have been part of that same method. Furthermore, he failed to appreciate that orally based folk religious traditions may have modes of performance, function and coherence that cannot appropriately be understood nor measured by the same criteria applied to literary textual traditions of religious discourse.

Nanji

In this respect, Azim Nanji's work on Satpanth, which we shall now address, makes significant strides in its approach to and analysis of the *ginān* tradition. A revision of his doctoral thesis (McGill, 1972), Nanji's book entitled **The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent** is the next major work on Satpanth literature. It should be noted that his book, which was published in 1978, appeared more than three decades after Ivanow's monograph. Nanji's work offers a unique perspective on the origin and development of Satpanth literature and its major themes, and remains to date an indispensable introduction to the *ginān* tradition. The purpose of his study, as he himself states in his preface, is to

fill a long standing gap in our knowledge of how Nizārī Ismā'īlism emerged and developed in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent. It is primarily an attempt to provide a perspective on their history and heritage, utilizing hitherto neglected oral and written sources.²³

It is important to stress the point that "*gināns* form the focal source on which this study rests."²⁴ This fact may not be readily apparent to the reader since Nanji does not quote directly from his sources or offer translations of the select portions of the works he has consulted, except in his final chapter on the themes in the *ginān* tradition. Rather, he

²³ Nanji, **The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition** (1978:ix).

²⁴ Ibid., 7.



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integrates the *ginān* narratives into his own descriptions as he attempts to interpret their value for reconstructing the historical development of Satpanth Ismāʿilism. Thus, like Ivanow, Nanji also bases his work on original sources; but Nanji has the added advantage of being fluent and conversant with the scripts and the languages of the Satpanth literature.

The sources from which Nanji has drawn are immense in scope. During the course of his research and field work, he consulted over 150 manuscripts in the Khojki script and his discussions, as a rule, have relied on versions of *gināns* preserved in older manuscripts. In his appendix, which is a valuable resource for students of Satpanth literature, he lists the eighteen major compositions that he consulted for his study and provides bibliographical notes for each, including a short synopsis, the alleged author, the length of the work, and whenever possible, the location of the oldest known manuscript copy. To indicate the extensiveness of the primary sources he consulted, it should be noted that of the eighteen *ginān* compositions listed, over a third are approximately 500 verses in length and the remainder range anywhere from 50 to 250 verses. This is truly a large volume of material to have examined. It is unfortunate that, as yet, few of the works Nanji consulted are accessible in translation.

Nanji indicates the following as his criteria for selecting the works listed in his appendix as the basis of his study: that they should be found in older manuscripts; that their importance should be attested to by the frequency of their appearance in the manuscripts as well as the frequency of their recitation during religious rituals; and that their content be of relevance to an historical investigation of the Ismāʿilī *daʿwah* in the Indo-Pak region. As he himself explains:

Since the historical spread of the *daʿwa* is a major concern of this study, I have selected those *gināns* that purport to give data on the activity of the *dāʿīs* and from which information relevant to the history of the



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da'wa and the methods used to propagate the da'wa's teaching, can be culled.²⁵

As a consequence of his selection criteria, a key feature of the *gināns* consulted by Nanji is that they belong predominantly to the genre of narrative, perhaps with the exception of **Moman Cetāmaṇi** and **Saloko Moṭo/Nāno**, which contain extensive counsels on the ethical life and the True Path. Since the *ginān* corpus also contains works that are mystical, devotional, and allegorical, it would be incorrect to regard Nanji's selection as *representative* of the range of Satpanth literature. But by clearly stating his criteria, he has prevented any such misunderstanding.

Unlike Ivanow, who totally rejects the narratives found in the *ginān* heritage as having any historical value, Nanji attempts to draw some meaning from these traditional accounts. Approaching them as oral tradition and sacred history, he searches the narratives for clues that they might contain on the workings of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in the Indian subcontinent. He also clarifies that while the narratives may be limited in terms of their historical accuracy, they are significant at another level of analysis in as much as they preserve and reveal the community's subjective memory and image of its own beginnings and development.²⁶

Nanji criticizes Ivanow for his narrow understanding of historical evidence, which leads the latter to comment that the *ginān* tradition displayed no interest in its history. He correctly says that Ivanow "failed, in fact, to see that not only were the *gināns* shot through with historical testimony but also that the data reflected the tradition's own self-image about its historical development."²⁷ On the other hand, Nanji does not uncritically accept this testimony, and is careful to insist that the evidence preserved in

25 Ibid., 21.
26 Ibid., 22-24.
27 Ibid., 22.



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the *ginān* tradition be rigorously sifted and weighed in relation to other sources when attempting to write a history of Satpanth Ismāʿilism. Whereas the accounts may not be acceptable in a literal sense, Nanji points out that their symbolic significance may shed light on other dimensions of Satpanth history and doctrine.

For example, after carefully presenting in detail the hagiographic accounts of the earliest *pīrs* contained in the *gināns*, and assessing them in relation to archaeological, genealogical and other historical data, Nanji finally concludes that, “In all this, the historical personalities of the *pīrs* remain dim and obscure.”²⁸ Yet, while the narratives may have been imperfect for writing history, Nanji discovers through an analysis of their literary structure a common episodic pattern that he identifies as a prototypical *daʿwah* motif. He says,

It is obvious in the case of our narratives that this pattern or thematic development is iterative and deals in a stereotypic fashion with the activities of the *dāʿīs*.²⁹

In the case of the narratives on Pīr Shams, Nanji identifies the following recurrent pattern of episodes: the *pīr* arrives at a religious centre in India (*jambudvīpa*) from Iraq; he performs a miracle thus gaining a disciple or the attention of the ruler; or he confronts a local saint and overcomes him; the people are impressed and convert; the *pīr* then departs.³⁰ According to Nanji, the religious meaning of this type of narrative is that, “By providing constant reference to the past, through a series of events locked in this past, the narratives are constantly recreating the identity of the movement.”³¹ That is, since the narratives repeatedly identify the *pīrs*’ origin as Iraq, or the lands to the west, namely, the location of the Nizārī Ismāʿilī centre, Nanji maintains that in this

28 Ibid., 69.

29 Ibid., 55.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., 56.



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symbolic fashion, they effectively sustain the link of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism with “its Islamic origins and Shiʿite orientation.”³²

Thus, by the application of methods of analysis that take into consideration the specifically oral, literary and mythic character of the sources, and their import both in terms of historical evidence as well as sacred tradition, Nanji is able to make greater uses of the *ginān* material in interpreting Satpanth history and identity. Indeed, it should be said of his book that he consistently attempts to open up fresh avenues of approach to the *ginān* tradition by applying current methods of mythic, folkloric and literary analysis. This thesis will attempt to carry further Nanji's approach by examining the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams for clues to his time and identity.

Three significant aspects of Nanji's book have been pointed out here: his extensive use of the *ginān* tradition as both the focus and foundation of his study; his appreciation of tradition as a limited but valid source for attempting a reconstruction of the formation of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism; and his interpretation of the *gināns* as a symbolic record and projection of the emergent community's self-image and identity. The final point to note is Nanji's discussion concerning the origin, composition, transmission and recording of the *ginān* literature. As an historical study of the formation of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, one of Nanji's central contributions is his discernment of different strata in the *ginān* literature. Through his inspection of the *ginān* corpus, Nanji was able to detect distinctions that were correlated with different phases of Satpanth history. Accordingly, he divides the material in the *ginān* corpus into three phases: the period of the tradition's emergence; the time of its consolidation; and, finally, the period of internal schisms and their impact.

32 Ibid.



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Nanji attempts to furnish characteristics typically expected in each phase. Thus, for instance, he suggests that the earliest strata of *gināns* “would likely be those which make appeals for conversion and seek to provide a doctrinal framework for the convert.”³³ The systematic development of such criteria by which to identify with relative precision the historical period to which any particular *ginān* composition belongs is critical to the student of Satpanth literature due to the complex and unresolved problems that exist with respect to the origin and authorship of its specific compositions, questions that manuscript study alone is unlikely to answer. Nanji thus makes a significant step in distinguishing among these phases and articulating some broad characteristics. However, only after careful linguistic and textual analysis of a wide range of *gināns*, will it become possible to determine the periodization of the literature and the central characteristics of each phase.

Let us turn now to those studies that are exclusively devoted to the translation and exposition of specific works from the *ginān* corpus. Unfortunately, of the more than one thousand compositions in the *ginān* corpus, only a handful have been translated, much less analysed. It should also be noted that with the exception of Ivanow's study, the few scholarly works that exist on the *ginān* tradition have been authored by Ismā‘īlī scholars. In addition to the reasons discussed earlier concerning the general neglect of Satpanth Ismā‘īlism, this situation may also be due to the fact that there has been an unwillingness to make the *gināns* accessible to outsiders. Ismā‘īlī scholars may not only have greater facility with the various languages of Satpanth literature, but they have easier access to these religious texts than do non-Ismā‘īlī scholars.

³³ Ibid., 16.



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Khakee

The first scholarly study of a specific *ginān* composition was Gulshan Khakee's doctoral dissertation submitted at Harvard in 1972 titled "The Dasa Avatāra of the Satpanthi Ismailis and the Imam Shahis of Indo-Pakistan." In this work, Khakee offers a translation of the **Dasamo Avatār**, that is, the tenth (*dasamo*) part of the *ginān* called **Das Avatār** attributed to the Ismā'īlī *pīr*, Imām Shāh (d. ca. 1513 C.E.). There are three distinct compositions in the *ginān* corpus, all bearing the title **Das Avatār**, attributed to various *pīrs*. The shortest and possibly, the prototype for the other two is attributed to Pīr Shams and is written in archaic Sindhi. The other two **Das Avatār**, prefixed by the adjectives *Moṭo* (large) and *Nāno* (small), are attributed to Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn and Imām Shāh respectively. They are written in Gujarati. Khakee's dissertation is focused on the longest of these three versions of the **Das Avatār**, namely the *Moṭo Das Avatār* attributed to Imām Shāh. She includes in her appendices, however, transliterations of the full texts of the **Das Avatārs** attributed to Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn and Pīr Shams. In addition to her translation and transliterations, Khakee's dissertation also includes a lengthy linguistic analysis of the work's phonemic and morphological components.

The title of the *ginān*, **Das Avatār**, alludes to the ten incarnations of the Hindu deity Viṣṇu, who is viewed as the supreme god in some Hindu Vaiṣṇavite circles. In her introduction, Khakee summarizes the first nine parts of the *Moṭo Das Avatār*. She has little commentary or analysis of the text except to say that it superimposes "a Shi'ite, Ismaili form of Islam on a Vaiṣṇava Hindu substructure."³⁴ She describes the basic theme of the **Das Avatār** as "the theme of God's [*sic*] coming to man in an

³⁴ Gulshan Khakee, "The Dasa Avatāra of the Satpanthi Ismailis and Imam Shahis of Indo-Pakistan" (Harvard University: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1972), 3.



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incarnation for the ‘liberation’ of man and the destruction of the demon (evil).”³⁵ She also points out that the stories of the ten *avatārs*, while utilizing the names and themes of the ten incarnations found in the Vaiṣṇava tradition, are often altered to such a degree that they are difficult to recognise. Also, in its use of Hindu myths and symbolism, the work is distinctively more Hindu than Islamic. The key factor that turns the work from being Hindu into being Muslim is the identification of ‘Alī as the tenth *avatār*. According to Khakee, it is this “transplantation” that determines the identity of Satpanth “as Muslim, rather than Hindu because the tenth *avatāra* is Muslim, with a well developed tradition ready, so as not to be reabsorbed into Hinduism.”³⁶ It is intriguing to note, however, that Khakee also asserts that “at no point does ‘Dasa Avatāra’ specifically state that Ali is the tenth *avatāra* of Vishnu.”³⁷ Rather, the identification between ‘Alī and the tenth incarnation is made indirectly.

A perusal of the *Dasamo Avatār* reveals a composition of epic proportions devoted to the dramatization of battle and conflict between the protagonist, the Shāh, who is the awaited *avatār*, and his opponent, Kaliṅga, the personification of evil. Narrating intricately the events leading up to the battle and describing in detail the opposing armies, the omens preceding their conflict, their weaponry and the battle scenes, the work’s hyperbolic dimensions fit into the mould of the *Itihāsa* tradition, recalling the epic poems, the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. Like Ivanow, Khakee reacts cynically to the mythical and folkloric nature of the work and concludes,

the text of the ‘Dasa Avatāra’ of Imām Shāh . . . appears intellectually [to be] at an unphilosophical, unsophisticated and folkloric level . . . in sharp contrast to the Fātimid and Iranian phases of Ismailism.³⁸

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- 35 Ibid., 42.
36 Ibid., 43.
37 Ibid., 44.
38 Ibid., 41.



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Although Khakee's appreciation of the *Dasamo Avatār* is limited by this point of view, and her engagement with the text is restricted to a grammatical level, her translation of the work remains an important contribution for further analysis and interpretation. It should also be pointed out that Khakee's translation is based on two manuscripts dated 1737 C.E. and 1815/23 C.E. respectively. The older manuscript was located in the Ismailia Association Library in Karachi and belonged to the Satpanth *Ismā'īlīs*. It was written in the Khojkī script. The later manuscript was located at Deccan College, Poona, and was written in the Devanāgarī script. It was loaned to her by a member of the Imām Shāhī sect, a splinter group that broke off from the Satpanth *Ismā'īlīs* in the 16th century but that had retained and preserved specimens of Satpanth literature up to that period. Khakee transliterates both the Khojkī and Devanāgarī versions of the *Dasamo Avatār* in her dissertation, but her translation is based on the version in the older Khojkī manuscript. It is not clear whether Khakee had intended to prepare a critical edition of the text.

Asani

The second study of a specific work from Satpanth literature was Ali Asani's doctoral dissertation submitted at Harvard in 1984 titled, "The "Būjh Nirāñjan": A Critical Edition of a Mystical Poem in Medieval Hindustani with its Khojkī and Gujarati Recensions." In his introduction to this poem, which is attributed to the early fifteenth-century *Ismā'īlī dā'ī*, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, Asani questions whether the work was, in fact, authored by Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn or, for that matter, any other *Ismā'īlī pīr*. His investigations led him to conclude that the *Būjh Nirāñjan* originated in Ṣūfī circles, and further, that it was most likely composed by the Qādirī Ṣūfī saint, Shaikh 'Īsā Jundallāh (c. 1555–1621 C.E.). He speculates that the work found its way into the *Ismā'īlī* milieu in Punjāb where there were close contacts between the Ṣūfīs and



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Ismāʿīlīs. He then attempts to show how the work was changed to make it fit for adoption into the *ginān* corpus.

At the outset, the controversial nature of Asani's work should be noted. Until 1991, when the dissertation was revised and published as a book, **The Būjh Nirañjan: An Ismaili Mystical Poem** (Cambridge: Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1991), access to his dissertation was restricted by the author in case his research might adversely affect the modern-day Satpanth Ismāʿīlī community. The **Būjh Nirañjan**, a mystical poem about the path to divine union, is revered and cherished by the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs. It is regularly recited during prayers associated with their daily, pre-dawn discipline of meditation (*bandagī*). Understandably, Asani's contention that the **Būjh Nirañjan** was not an authentic Ismāʿīlī work would not have been welcomed by the community. Aware of the objectionable nature of his findings, Asani writes:

The *ginān* literature had been traditionally considered without exception, to be the exclusive tradition of the Ismāʿīlī community of Indo-Pakistan. Now, for the first time, a *ginān* manuscript has been discovered which, as we shall see below, seems to have originated in non-Ismāʿīlī circles.³⁹

However, for students of this religious literature, the publication of his dissertation is a valuable addition to studies on Satpanth Ismāʿīlism.

Asani's work represents a major contribution to *ginān* studies for several reasons. Firstly, in the process of assessing various manuscripts and versions, and of preparing a critical edition and translation of the **Būjh Nirañjan**, he has developed and applied an impressive critical apparatus and methodology for the study of other Khojki manuscripts in the *ginān* corpus. Similarly, in his discussion of scripts, he breaks new

³⁹ Ali S. Asani, "The **Būjh Nirañjan**: A Critical Edition of a Mystical Poem in Medieval Hindustani with its Khojki and Gujarati Recensions" (Harvard University: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1984), 17–18.



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ground with his investigation of the origin, nature and idiosyncracies of the Khojkī script. This topic is critically important not only to those who must consult Khojkī manuscripts, but also to translators of the *ginān* tradition who must make sense of words distorted by modifications in orthography when transposed from the Perso-Arabic script to Khojkī or from Khojkī to Gujarati. Accordingly, his discussion of the various types of errors and changes that occur as the scribe moves among different scripts and languages provides helpful clues on how to decipher what might otherwise appear to be meaningless *ginānic* vocabulary.

Secondly, in situating the *Būjh Nirāñjan* within the wider framework of Indo-Muslim literatures, and specifically within the genre of vernacular *Ṣūfī* literature, Asani introduces a different perspective on the relationship of the *ginān* tradition to its broader context. It becomes evident that the *ginān* literature provided an interface between Ismāʿīlism and several Indian religious currents, including Hinduism and *Ṣūfism*. Also, Asani rightly emphasizes the link between the diffusion of Islam and its vernacularization, and draws attention to the fact that the neglect of folk Indo-Muslim traditions, which includes Satpanth material, has prevented a full appreciation of their far-reaching role and significance in spreading Islam.

Placed within this broader context of the indigenous Islamic traditions in the region, the main thesis and task of Asani's work is to demonstrate that,

though at present the *Būjh Nirāñjan* is part of the *ginān* literature . . . it originally belonged to the medieval *Ṣūfī* literature of the region. [9]

His conclusion is more precise in that he finds sufficient evidence to argue that the composition of the *Būjh Nirāñjan* originated in the Qādirī *Ṣūfī* order, and that it was probably composed by one of the order's saints, Ḥazrat Jundallāh, also known by the title “Masīḥ al-Awliyā.” If his conclusion is warranted, it raises several new questions



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about the nature and composition of the *ginān* tradition. Since the **Būjh Nirañjan** is still a living part of the ritual practices of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs, by what criteria can it still be deemed a *ginān* if indeed it is not an Ismāʿīlī but a Šūfī work? In speaking of his criteria, Asani says that the **Būjh Nirañjan** must be a Šūfī work since it shares the following features of medieval Šūfī literature: the use of indigenous literary forms; the use of Indian names and epithets to refer to God; an emphasis on love in the mystical path; the depiction of woman as a symbol of the human soul; the exalted status of the preceptor; and the influence of *waḥdat al-wujūd* or unity doctrines. However, it may be said that each of the above traits is typical not only to medieval Šūfī literature, but also to medieval Hindu *bhakti* literature, as well as the *ginān* tradition. The possession of these features alone does not sufficiently establish the **Būjh Nirañjan** as a uniquely Šūfī work.

Asani's evidence and critical apparatus, however, are impressive. To address the issue of the authorship and defend his assertion that the **Būjh Nirañjan** is not an Ismāʿīlī but a Šūfī work, he examines three areas in detail: manuscript evidence; linguistic and literary form; and internal textual evidence. In preparing his critical edition, Asani relies principally on two different versions of the text, which he refers to as the Šūfī and the Ismāʿīlī version respectively. The Khojkī manuscripts were obtained from the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs, but the Perso-Arabic manuscript was located at the India Office Library in London. Asani has not mentioned whether this manuscript was originally obtained from a Šūfī *ṭarīqah*, nor whether the **Būjh Nirañjan** still exists in the literature of the present-day Qādirī order.

The version of the **Būjh Nirañjan** found among the Ismāʿīlīs is represented by four manuscripts written in the Khojkī script and several printed editions both in the Khojkī and Gujarati scripts. Of the Khojkī manuscripts, none predates the 1850s. On the other hand, the so-called Šūfī version is represented by a sole exemplar which exists in



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an older manuscript dated 1724 C.E. and is written in the Perso-Arabic script. It is the specific nature of this older Perso-Arabic manuscript and the differences that exist between it and the Khojki/Gujarati versions that lead Asani to raise questions “about the traditionally accepted view that the Būjh Nirāñjan has an Ismā‘ilī origin.”⁴⁰

Asani asserts that *gināns* were typically recorded in the Khojki script, and so, the fact that the oldest extant version is in the Perso-Arabic script is most unusual. He claims that this manuscript is “the only known *ginān* manuscript from the 18th and 19th centuries that is not written in the Khojki script.”⁴¹ Moreover, the manuscript begins with an unfamiliar invocation in the *ginān* context, namely, *yā gaus al-a‘zam*, which is an epithet associated with the Šūfī master, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gilānī (ca. 1077/8–1166 C.E.). It is the presence of this invocation which suggests to Asani that the scribe and, indeed, the author himself was affiliated with the Qādirī Šūfī order.

Asani notes the close relations between the Ismā‘ilīs and the Šūfis from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, the period—referred to by Ivanow as the Anjudān revival—that resulted in “Sufico-Ismā‘ilī” writings. Asani thinks that during this period of Ismā‘ilī–Šūfī alliance, the Būjh Nirāñjan may have been absorbed by the Ismā‘ilīs who would have been receptive to works with Šūfī themes. He argues that the liberal use of Šūfī technical terms in the Būjh Nirāñjan is rather unusual for works in the *ginān* tradition.⁴² In addition to the above arguments, Asani also presents textual and linguistic evidence against the Ismā‘ilī authorship of the Būjh Nirāñjan.

40 Ibid., 19.

41 Ibid., 18. The implication of this statement, however, namely, that *ginān* manuscripts could not have existed in the Persian or Gujarati scripts, is questionable.

42 It is also possible, however, that the Būjh Nirāñjan represents a rare specimen of Ismā‘ilī writings marking the transitional phase between the Anjudān and Satpanth periods.



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Jamani

Following Khakee's and Asani's work on the *Dasamo Avatār* and *Būjh Nirañjan* respectively, the next study of a major *ginān* composition was offered by Hasina Jamani in her master's thesis titled, "Brahma Prakāsh, A Translation and Analysis," submitted to the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University in 1985. Describing the *ginān* as a "didactic work, composed in a mystical vein,"⁴³ Jamani concludes that **Brahma Prakāśa** "seems to super-impose a Shī'ī form of Islam upon the Haṭha Yoga frame-work of the Tantric tradition."⁴⁴ Jamani's translation and analysis is based on a printed edition of the work published in Gujarati in 1921 by Lālji Devrāj, who transliterated many *gināns* from Khojkī manuscripts into the Gujarati script and made them available in print. Jamani was unsuccessful in obtaining manuscript copies of **Brahma Prakāśa** and has based her study on the Devrāj edition.

While Jamani describes the different theories regarding the identity of Pīr Shams, she has not directly addressed the question of the authorship and dating of **Brahma Prakāśa**. Since the *ginān* is traditionally attributed to Pīr Shams, Jamani asserts that **Brahma Prakāśa** reflects "the earliest efforts of the pīr to project Satpanth or Nizārī Ismā'īlism to the new converts from Hinduism."⁴⁵ However, internal evidence in the **Brahma Prakāśa** and its linguistic nature suggest that it was composed at least two centuries later than the time of Pīr Shams.⁴⁶ Jamani's acceptance of the traditional attribution of the poem to Pīr Shams leads to some difficulties. Thus, she also concludes that since Asani has disproven the Ismā'īlī origin of the *Būjh Nirañjan*, the

43 Hasina Jamani, "**Brahm Prakāsh**: A Translation and Analysis" (McGill University: unpublished M.A. thesis, 1985), ii.

44 Ibid., 70.

45 Ibid., 7.

46 I have alluded to this problem in my article "Syncretism" (Scholars Press: forthcoming).



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Brahma Prakāśa is the only other *gīnān* composition to deal with “the mystical theme of contemplation.”⁴⁷

Though Jamani does not address the authorship of **Brahma Prakāśa**, she does discuss in some detail the identity of its alleged author, Pīr Shams. She notes the problem of the multiple identities of Pīr Shams and the confusion of this *pīr* with two other famous personalities, the Nizārī Imām, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad and the mystic Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī’s mentor, Shams-i Tabrīz. Several theories are presented, but Jamani was unable to reach any tentative conclusions regarding the approximate dates or provenance of Pīr Shams.

In addition to offering a literal translation of the work, the main contribution of Jamani’s thesis is her analysis of the Tantric influences in the poem. Reiterating Khakee’s thesis that the “Dasamo Avatār . . . superimposed a Shī’ite, Ismaili form of Islam on a Vaiṣṇava Hindu substructure,”⁴⁸ similarly she asserts that “**Brahma Prakāśh** . . . superimposes upon the Tantric framework a Shī’ī form of Islam.”⁴⁹ The broader framework of interpretation for both authors is Ivanow’s theory that *gīnāns* reflect the attempts of the Ismā’īlī *pīrs* to facilitate conversion by creating a bridge between Ismā’īlism and Hinduism.

Based on the assumption that Satpanth Ismā’īlism is a translation of Nizārī Ismā’īlism in the Indian environment, Jamani tries to demonstrate how **Brahma Prakāśa**, although it is permeated with Tantric symbols and concepts, represents at heart the teaching of Nizārī Ismā’īlism. Accordingly, her method of analysis proceeds by separately identifying the concepts of both the Tantric and Nizārī Ismā’īlī religious

⁴⁷ Jamani, “**Brahm Prakāśh**” (1985:56).

⁴⁸ Khakee, “The **Dasa Avatāra**” (1972:3).

⁴⁹ Jamani, “**Brahm Prakāśh**” (1985:ii).



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systems, and then showing how **Brahma Prakāśa** conveys the essence of Nizārī teachings through Tantric ideas. This synchronic method of searching for parallel concepts to comprehend the type of “bridge” constructed by **Brahma Prakāśa** is interesting, and a practice initiated by Ivanow. However, sometimes Jamani draws parallels that lack careful and systematic textual demonstration, and that require greater appreciation of historical and religious nuances.

For instance, in presenting **Brahma Prakāśa** as an expression of the mystical path in Nizārī Ismā‘īlism, Jamani asserts that it is characterised by a personal, interior relationship between the *imām* and the *murīd* (seeker, follower). This theory of an inner orientation after the fall of Alamūt has been stressed by Nanji and Esmail:

Henceforth, the individual search for inner, spiritual transformation received increasing emphasis in the articulation of the [Ismā‘īlī] faith . . . the goal was to attain . . . a vision of the Imāms' spiritual reality.⁵⁰

Assuming this inner orientation as the framework for Satpanth Ismā‘īlism, Jamani maintains that mystical *gināns* such as the Būjh Nirañjan and **Brahma Prakāśa** emphasize the Nizārī quest for a spiritual relationship between the *imām* and the *murīd*, and represent the core of Satpanth teachings. While this interpretation is stated, it is not clear that it is also derived from the text itself. Jamani describes the purpose of this spiritual relationship as being

in order that the [murīd] might attain the divine vision (*darśan*). For to attain the divine vision of the Lord is equated with the attainment of moksa (liberation) from human life on earth.⁵¹

Further, as taught in the **Brahma Prakāśa**, the practice of remembrance (*sumiran*) of the sacred word “Pīr Shāh” led the *murīd* from

50 Esmail & Nanji, “The Ismā‘īlīs” (1977:254).

51 Jamani, “Brahm Prakāsh” (1985:36).



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stage to stage of mystical experience to eventual absorption in the unfathomable depths of one's own inner self hood to experience the divine . . . i.e. attains the inner reality of the Imām.⁵²

The main weakness with this analysis is Jamani's attempt to prove that **Brahma Prakāśa** expresses the Nizārī Ismā'īlī quest for salvation as expressed in the *imām–murīd* relationship. Notably, since the term *murīd* is not once used in **Brahma Prakāśa**, what argument can be made internal to the text itself which demonstrates that the relationship involved here is the one stated above? Also, the text describes the goal of the mystical path as the experience of *darśan* (apprehending the countenance of the deity) and *mokṣa* (liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth). Jamani says this is the same goal as that of the *imām–murīd* relationship. Does this mean, therefore, that *darśan* is the Hindu equivalent of the Ṣūfī *ʿirfān* (gnosis) or of the Ismā'īlī *ḥaqīqah* (truth)? Are we to understand that the ideas of divine “seeing” and “liberation” as understood in the Hindu tradition were an intrinsic part of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī system? The answer to these questions remain obscure.

Nevertheless, the attention that Jamani draws to the proximity between concepts in the **Brahma Prakāśa**, on the one hand, and the Tantric tradition, on the other, is worth pursuing further. If **Brahma Prakāśa** is an Ismā'īlī reconstruction of Tantric teachings, a systematic demonstration of how this reconstruction occurs in the text would shed light on the ways in which the *daʿwah* may have reappropriated materials from the Indian context for its own uses.

Also interesting is the question why Tantric ideas came to be integrated into the Satpanth *daʿwah* in the first place. Is it possible to trace any historical, sociological or religious reasons to account for the influence of Tantrism on the expression of Satpanth

⁵² Ibid., 75–77.



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Ismāʿilism. Did the Satpanth *daʿwah* have any contact with Tantric sects in the region? In her conclusion, Jamani briefly takes up this question and offers one of the most promising ideas in her thesis, namely, that the Ismāʿilī *pīrs* may have been attracted to Tantrism because of its esoteric, cryptic vocabulary, and its use of *sandhabhāṣā* or “twilight language.”⁵³ This play on multiple meanings and a secret, symbolic religious language may have had consonance with the Ismāʿilī practice of *taʿwīl* or allegorical interpretation.

In aggregate, the specific investigations of Khakee, Asani and Jamani show an intriguing phenomenon, namely that Satpanth Ismāʿilism accommodated, appropriated or was shaped by several religious currents in the Indian context including Śūfism, Vaiṣṇavism and Tantrism. Nizārī Ismāʿilī ideas are dimly present, and mostly appear to be inserted or grafted on. The authors differ in their discernment and stress on this presence. As more and more primary sources of the *ginān* tradition are translated and analysed, what becomes apparent is the mix and diversity of religious ideas found in Satpanth Ismāʿilism. However, the premise that Satpanth is the Indian form of Nizārī Ismāʿilism deters scholars from a sharper, phenomenological view of the specific configuration of religious ideas and symbolism articulated within the texts themselves. It also encourages a type of analysis that begins with conclusions.

Allana

Finally, one more work on the *ginān* tradition deserves mention, namely, G. Allana’s **Ginans of Ismaili Pirs Rendered into English Verse** published in Karachi by the Ismailia Association for Pakistan in 1984. The book’s foreword by the President of the Association, Ashiqueali H. Hussain, describes the importance of *ginān* recitation in

⁵³ Ibid., 103.



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the daily lives of Satpanth Khojās as an “enrichment of their souls.”⁵⁴ The forward indicates the intended audience of the book: “This English Verse Rendering of Ginans. . . would be of particular interest and immense use for our younger generation who are unable to read the Ginans in their original languages.”⁵⁵ As an official publication of the Ismailia Association, the book is directed at an Ismā‘īlī audience to enhance its own appreciation of its *ginān* heritage.

In describing the purpose of his book, G. Allana reiterates the above concern for the younger generation's understanding of the *ginān* heritage and all that it represents. To a scholar, his introduction is particularly useful for its expression of the sentimental attachment that the Satpanth Khojahs, in particular, the older generation, feel towards the *ginān* tradition. The role of beautiful recitation and the impact of well-sung *gināns* is emphasized in his tribute to his own mother, whose soothing voice created “a spiritual atmosphere,” and through which “the weight of life's burdens dissolved [sic].”⁵⁶ Allana also points out that for generations, *gināns* have been used not only as devotional hymns, but also as proof-texts in the sermons and lectures given by preachers during daily and special prayer services.

Allana's volume is in two parts: an introduction including a brief history of the Satpanth *da‘wah*, and a fairly extensive translation of selected works attributed to various *pīrs*. The first part reiterates, in edifying and embroidered style, the origins of the Satpanth Khojahs, and includes subjective reflections and analyses of Satpanth teachings. What is of particular interest to us is the second part of the book, which gives transliterations followed by translations of various *gināns*. Since so few works in the *ginān* corpus

⁵⁴ Allana, *Ginans of Ismaili Pirs* (1984:viii).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 2.



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are available in translation, Allana's work is noteworthy because it presents a broad range of the literature, with selections from all the major *pīrs*. Additionally, the *gināns* that have been translated include both popular and widely recited *gināns*, as well as less well-known ones in languages such as Punjābi and Sindhi.

It is greatly disappointing, therefore, to find that in his attempt to render the *gināns* into English verse, not only has Allana often sacrificed accuracy, but he has delivered translations that are stiff, contrived, and affected. This is unfortunate since, as he states, he spent "hundreds and hundreds of hours" on the task of translation: "I had decided to be true to the text of the ginans. But I also decided to bring into prominence . . . the spiritual content."⁵⁷ However, far from having the intended effect of attracting readers to the *ginān* tradition, the translations are likely to alienate readers. His forced rhyming and versification simply produce unhappy and dubious results. A few examples will illustrate some problems with his translations in general.

O brother,
You, O my Soul, beware: here who is your Protector?
Do not be a loser, hear the *guru* this utter. Sayed Ghulam Ali Shah⁵⁸

There is no equivalent for the word "Protector" in this *ginān*, which literally asks, "Who in this world is yours?" The idiom "loser" in English conveys meanings quite different from those intended by the phrase in the *ginān* which can be translated, "Do not go round and round in circles of illusion (or falsehood)." The rhyme between the words "hear" and "Protector" in the third line and "here" and "utter" is forced and clumsy. The following examples should suffice to illustrate further these problems of awkward expression, inaccuracy and artificial verse.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 9.
⁵⁸ Ibid., 323.



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Now, by Your Love I am struck;
My heart by Your Love is struck;
Let Your eyes with mine have truck.

Pir Shams ⁵⁹

O my brothers,
In Paradise countless blessings throb,
Why do you such treasure spurn and yourself rob?

Sayed Imām Shāh ⁶⁰

Except for these weaknesses, Allana's translation remains, nonetheless, a worthy effort; since the task of translation is extremely difficult, particularly when the goal is to capture the idiomatic and aesthetic nuances of the original.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid., 132. An "enhanced" version of my rendering is as follows:
O Beloved! I am smitten by your love!
Alas, my heart is swept away by love;
O precious Sāheb, let our eyes meet in embrace.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 281. My rendering:
O Brothers! In heaven are eternal pleasures;
So frolic not in this world to forsake the next.

⁶¹ For a discussion of the difficulties faced in translating the works attributed to Pir Shams, see Part B, Notes on Translation.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SATPANTH ISMĀ'ILISM

At this stage, it is necessary to consider why Ismā'ilism evolved into Satpanth in the Indian subcontinent, and accordingly, to assess the historical significance of this development in Ismā'ilī history. Satpanth Ismā'ilism is strikingly different from both Fā'imīd and Nizārī Ismā'ilism. As specific studies of the *ginān* tradition have shown, the Satpanth heritage is deeply indigenous in its embrace of Indian dialects, culture and religious worldview. To date, the profound influence of Hindu Vaiṣṇavism and Bhakti, Tantrism, Ṣūfism and other religious currents in India on the expression of Satpanth Ismā'ilism has been explained mainly by what may be termed the conversion theory.¹

According to this theory, the origin and form of Satpanth Ismā'ilism can be attributed to the goal of religious conversion. The *ginān* heritage has mainly been understood in the context of the *da'wah* or missionary activity of the Nizārī Ismā'ilīs in the Indian subcontinent who attracted converts into their fold by conveying their beliefs through the use of familiar Indian religious myths and symbols. That is, the prevailing explanation for the formation of Satpanth is that it was developed by the Nizārī *dā'īs* or

¹ The first proponent of this theory was Wladimir Ivanow, cf. "Satpanth," *Collectanea* (1948). It has been accepted as the critical interpretive model since then in all major studies of Satpanth Ismā'ilism. For instance, see Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'ilī Tradition* (1978); Asani, *The Būjh Nirafjān* (1991a); and most recently, Daftary, *The Ismā'ilīs* (1990).



pīrs primarily to spread the teachings of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah*. It is generally argued that in order to make the transition of potential converts from Hinduism to Ismāʿīlī Islam as easy as possible, the *pīrs* adopted the strategy of accommodating indigenous religious mores and concepts. Satpanth's form and content were, accordingly, derived principally from the Indian milieu, and this method was successful in gaining converts to Ismāʿīlism.² This interpretation has set the parameters and determined the approach of most work done on the *gīnān* tradition to date.

A secondary but much less explored explanation for the nature of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism is that it was also a means of *taqīyah* (religious dissimulation), a way to protect new converts to Ismāʿīlism from persecution both by the Hindu communities and the hostile Turkish Sunnī rulers of the Indian subcontinent.

In this section I would like to re-engage this question of why Ismāʿīlism developed into the specific form of Satpanth. There is no doubt that the *gīnān* literature has played a vital role in the religious life of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. What needs to be reconsidered, however, are the reasons for the evolution of Satpanth and the role it played in the actual conversion of Hindus and other non-Ismāʿīlīs. Was Satpanth and its *gīnān* tradition essentially developed for conversion? If so, would it be possible to explain conversion to Satpanth simply on the basis of the religious teachings in the *gīnāns*? Were there factors other than religious conversion that motivated the *pīrs'* activities and choices? Why did the method of indigenization become so integral to achieving their objectives?

² The conversion theory implies, of course, that since the form of Satpanth was *instrumental*, once its aims were attained, it was dispensable. Given the current trend of islamization among Ismāʿīlīs worldwide, the dispensable or irrelevant theory has taken root and spread particularly among the Ismāʿīlī leadership. This has caused significant heartache and a backlash among traditional segments that remain attached to the ritual and devotional modalities of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism.



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I would like to suggest that there may have been equally important political and social reasons for the emergence of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism in its specific Indic form, and that religious conversion *per se* may not, in fact, hold the key to the formation of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. This suspicion arises from several knotty questions. Firstly, why is it that when the Fāṭimid *daʿwah* sent its emissaries to Sind to spread Ismāʿīlī teachings in the ninth century, not only was the above strategy for conversion virtually never used, but also, when it was used by an unknown lenient *dāʿī*, it was sharply censured? Why would the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* thwart local accretions in one historical context and encourage them in another?

Secondly, by the twelfth/thirteenth century, Šūfism had already gained ground in India and it was certainly much closer in perspective to Nizārī Ismāʿīlism than was Hinduism. Yet, why did the Ismāʿīlī *pīrs* in India choose to express their teachings in terms of Hindu Vaiṣṇavism and not Šūfī Islam? Why did Satpanth not evolve as a Šūfī *tariqah*?

Thirdly, how is one to explain the wide gap in expression both in literary form and ritual practice that exists between the religious traditions of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism and Satpanth Ismāʿīlism? Generally speaking, established patterns of religious life and traditions tend to be conservative and self-preserving since they play an important role in forging and maintaining structures of religious identity. In foreign regions especially, one might expect considerable reluctance to condone variations of religious forms or doctrines, since leniency could easily lead to assimilation or inconsistency. How can Satpanth be a “translation” of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism, as it is generally projected to be, when it exists in so distinctive a form? Why did the Nizārī *pīrs* choose to convey Ismāʿīlī teachings in Indian vernaculars and religions when Muslim languages and manners were not unfamiliar in the areas of Sind and northwestern India? Why, in sum, did the *pīrs* decide to adopt a form for Ismāʿīlism in India which, for all intents and purposes,



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appears to have little in common either with its antecedent historical traditions or with Islam as such?

Surely religious conversion could not have been the sole motive for initiating a tradition that would stand in such stark contrast to its religious predecessors and that could, in the long term, develop away from them. Moreover, given the fact that the Ismā'īlīs claimed that the rightful leadership of the Muslim *ummah* (community) belonged to their *imāms*, why would the sect have risked submerging itself into the fabric of Indian religious life, which in so many respects was the antithesis of iconoclastic and priestless Islam? These questions are not sufficiently accounted for by the religious conversion theory alone.

Based on an interpretation of historical events, I would like to suggest that the reason why the Nizārī Ismā'īlī *da'wah* developed such an indigenized form of Ismā'īlism in the Indian subcontinent was not only religious but also socio-political. That is, the shape that Ismā'īlism took in India was intimately linked to events at the centre of the *da'wah*—first in Cairo, then in the sphere of Alamūt—as well as those in the local context of Sind and northwestern India.

It will be argued that the beginnings and formation of the Satpanth phase of Ismā'īlism in the Indian subcontinent coincided with the period from the end of the reign of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustansir bi'llāh to the Mongol destruction of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī headquarters at Alamūt, that is, from about 1094 C.E. to 1256 C.E. And further, that from this point onwards, given the collapse of the organizational centre at Alamūt and the consequent political and material losses of the Nizārī *da'wah*, dispersed Ismā'īlī locales most likely became responsible for charting their own course. That is to say, the policies and development of *da'wah* activity in the Indian subcontinent or Syria or Central Asia could no longer be guided with a uniform hand by a strong central *da'wah*



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located at Alamūt, but rather, were shaped by the force of events, socio-political realities and cultural complexes closer at hand.

The outline of my argument is as follows. I will briefly cover the political history of Ismāʿīlism up to the destruction of Alamūt in order to show how the form of the *daʿwah* in Sind and northwestern India was closely monitored and directed by the centre of the *daʿwah*, first in Cairo in North Africa, then Yaman, and finally, Alamūt. I will also show how social and historical realities in the Indian subcontinent combined to provide fertile ground for the development of an indigenous form of Ismāʿīlism. Further, I will outline how events affecting the *daʿwah* in the traditional Islamic lands as well as events in the subcontinent promoted—and perhaps even determined—the development of a specifically Indian form of Ismāʿīlism. Finally, I will argue that with the collapse of Alamūt, the *daʿwah* in India had no recourse but to fully develop Satpanth Ismāʿīlism in order to safeguard its survival.

This historical sketch will briefly cover the Ismāʿīlī movement over a period of some six centuries from the time of the Prophet Muḥammad's death in 642 C.E. to the Mongol invasion of Alamūt in Persia in 1256 C.E. Principally, I want to demonstrate that the development of Ismāʿīlism in the Indian subcontinent was closely connected with events taking place in the remoter, central regions of the Islamic and Ismāʿīlī world. Whereas Stern³ and others have dismissed any link between Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism in Sind in the ninth to eleventh centuries and the later development of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism in India in the twelfth century, I will argue that the evidence appears to suggest the contrary. It seems that these two phases and forms of Ismāʿīlism were

³ To quote: "The later phases of the history of Ismāʿīlism in Sind and in India stand in no direct connection with this first successful attempt to establish territorial rule in Sind." Stern, Samuel M., "Ismāʿīlī Propaganda and Fatimid Rule in Sind," *Islamic Culture* XXIII (1949) 303.



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linked by Nizārī Ismāʿīlī activity, and it may be possible to trace with some accuracy the period during which Satpanth Ismāʿīlism was conceived. It will be seen that Satpanth emerged out of the throes of a political and religious crisis, and had Ismāʿīlism not been thus reshaped in India, the sect's very survival would have been at stake. Finally, this section will also demonstrate why, as Maclean astutely observes, "the frequently vented causal argument which holds that Hindus converted to Ismāʿīlism in Sind as a simple consequence of congenial similarities in ideological themes would appear to miss the mark."⁴

The Roots of Sunnī-Shīʿī Ismāʿīlī Tensions in Pre-Fāṭimid History

The Ismāʿīlīs, as mentioned earlier, are a sub-sect of the Shīʿah branch of Islam that claims that the Prophet Muḥammad explicitly designated his cousin and son-in-law ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib to succeed him as the political and religious leader of the nascent Muslim community or *ummah*. According to the majority of the Shīʿah, the office of imāmate is hereditary and passes down through the progeny of ʿAlī and his wife Fāṭimah, daughter of the Prophet, by explicit designation (*naṣṣ*) generally to the eldest son.

The Sunnīs reject this claim and maintain that Muḥammad had left the question of leadership to the consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of the community's elders who, accordingly, elected Abū Bakr as the first caliph. The venture of Islam, then, began with a crisis of leadership over the Prophet's successor and led to a cleavage that eventually solidified into the Shīʿah and the Sunnī branches of Islam. This was an issue of serious consequence because after the *hijrah* (migration to Medina), the Prophet Muḥammad himself had led the early Muslim community not only in religious matters, but in

⁴ Maclean, *Religion and Society* (1989:157).



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economic and political ones as well. Muḥammad's career in Medina was in many respects an articulation of the Islamic ideal of a theocratic state.

Over the course of Islamic history, the Sunnīs and the Shī'ah each resolved differently the dilemma of providing for both religious and political aspects of the Prophet's authority. Broadly speaking, the Sunnī solution divided the Prophet's dual function into two: the office of the caliphate was to safeguard the Islamic state, and the Qur'ān and the Prophet's *sunnah* or example were to constitute the source of Islamic law. The Shī'ah, on the other hand, insisted that these two functions remained joined in the person of the *imām* whose authority, like the Prophet's, was construed to be both spiritual and temporal. While accepting the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* as sources of religious authority, the Shī'ah maintained that only the *imām* of the time possessed the divine knowledge or *ʿilm* to interpret Revelation.

The six centuries following these early disagreements bear witness to the internal struggles within the Islamic world over political and religious authority. From the start, the Shī'ah, the party of ʿAlī, suffered setbacks. When ʿAlī finally became the fourth caliph, he was assassinated (d. 661 C.E.); the rights of his elder son, Ḥasan, (d. 669 C.E.) were abdicated; and Ḥusayn, his younger son, was brutally dismembered in Karbalāʾ (d. 680 C.E.). These successive attacks against the *ahl al-bayt* or family of the prophet crystallized the Shī'ah movement and intensified its determination 'to seek justice and avenge the usurped position of its *imāms*.' It was partly in response to these early infractions and violence that the die was cast and the Shī'ah cause developed its revolutionary aspect. The Ismāʿīlīs, in particular, were to sustain for the longest period the political resolve to rectify the injustice they felt had been done to their *imāms* and to attempt to restore their rightful position.



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As has been stated, the office of imāmate was hereditary. Inevitably, over the course of Shī'ī history, differences of opinion arose over the issue of succession as a result of which the Shī'ah have splintered into many sub-sects distinguished by their lines of *imāms*. The Ismā'īlī sect emerged from a split that occurred in 765 C.E. following the death of the fifth Imām, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. The group that followed his elder son Ismā'īl al-Mubārak are the Ismā'ilīs, while those who supported Mūsā al-Qāṣim are known as the Twelvers (Ithnā' Asharī). With each split came further antagonisms, revenge and reprisals. According to Ismā'īlī sources, the four Ismā'īlī *imāms* succeeding Ja'far feared for their lives and went into hiding. During this time, they secretly organized their followers into a sophisticated organization called the *da'wah*. The word *da'wah* primarily means invitation or call to Islam. In the Ismā'īlī case, however, it also refers to a highly organized, hierarchically structured, religio-political network that not only promoted its political cause, but also elaborated and transmitted Ismā'īlī teachings.

The outreach activity and diplomatic maneuvers of the *da'wah* gradually won significant grassroots support for Ismā'īlī claims in Persia, Yaman, North Africa and even as far away as Sind, and culminated in the foundation of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī state. In 910 C.E., the twelfth Ismā'īlī Imām, 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī (d. 934 C.E.) was proclaimed the first Fāṭimid caliph and *amīr ul-mu'minīn* (commander of the faithful) in Ifrīqiya (Tunisia). This action marked, "the opening phase of the Ismā'īlī attempt to give concrete shape to their vision of an Islamic society."⁵

⁵ Azim Nanji, "Ismā'ilism," S. H. Nasr, ed. *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 180.



The Fāṭimid Dynasty and Its Relations to Sind

During Fāṭimid rule, the power and influence of Ismāʿīlism stretched beyond Egypt to include parts of Palestine, Syria, the Hijaz, Yaman, Persia, Syria, Sind and Sicily in the Mediterranean. Regarded as the most illustrious period of Ismāʿīlī history, Fāṭimid power spanned two centuries and stimulated an efflorescence in trade, scholarship, art and statecraft. What is of particular interest to us about the Fāṭimid enterprise is its links with the Indian subcontinent. Around 883 C.E., before the Fāṭimids came to power, the famous Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*, Abū al-Qāsim b. Hawshab Maṣṣūr al-Yaman established an Ismāʿīlī base in Yaman. In that same year, he sent his nephew, al-Haytham, to spread the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* in Sind.⁶ Less than a century later, the chief jurist of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Muʿizz, Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 974 C.E.), recorded in his *Risālat iftitāḥ al-daʿwah* (written ca. 957 C.E.) that the *daʿwah* in Sind was doing well.⁷

When the Fāṭimid *daʿwah* reached the subcontinent, Sind had both a Muslim and a non-Muslim population. Muslims had begun to visit India as early as the time of the third Caliph, ʿUthmān (644–656 C.E.). Pro-Shīʿī sentiments were present in Sind as early as 649 C.E. when al-Ḥākim al-ʿAbdī, a partisan of ʿAlī, raided Mukrān. The advent of Islam in the subcontinent was marked by the conquest of Sind by Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim in 711-712 C.E. Muḥammad seized the area from the coast all the way up to Multān along the Indus river. During his time, the main centres of Sind, al-Manṣūrah and Multān (Multān was the name of both a town and the surrounding region), were established.⁸ Although the Sunnī Arabs made no deliberate

⁶ Ismail K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismāʿīlī Literature* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1977), 34.

⁷ Abbas Hamdani, *The Beginnings of the Ismāʿīlī Daʿwa in Northern India* (Cairo: Sirovic, 1965), 1.

⁸ Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 3.



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or systematic attempts at conversion, much of the indigenous Buddhist population of Sind eventually became Muslim for economic reasons.⁹ It seems that the area of Upper Sind or Multān also had some previously-settled Arabs with ʿAlid (supporters of the first Shīʿī *imām*, ʿAlī) sympathies. In 871 C.E., Yaʿqūb ibn Layth was appointed ruler of Sind by the ʿAbbāsīd caliph and his pro-Shīʿī views may have helped the spread of Shīʿism in Sind.¹⁰ The geographer and historian, Masʿūdī, records in 915 C.E. that he found several descendants of ʿUmarī ʿAlids in the region of Multān.¹¹ After Yaʿqub's death (878 C.E.), Sind was divided between two independent Arab chiefs. The Banū Sāma ruled Multān, and the Quraysh Habbārīds governed al-Manṣūrah. While these dynasties were Sunnī, both areas appear to have been hospitable to the Shīʿah. Thus, by the time the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* reached Sind in 883 C.E., Sind already had a local population of Arab Muslims comprised both of Shīʿah and Sunnī, as well as indigenous Muslims comprised mainly of converted Buddhists.

While the Fāṭimid period has been distinguished as the most illustrious in Ismāʿīlī history, it was hardly free of great tension and conflict. During the expansion of the Fāṭimid empire, its vassal states were in close touch with the central *daʿwah* in North Africa. Events that occurred in distant regions of the Fāṭimid empire were communicated to the centre, which in turn radiated news within the *daʿwah* network. Thus, although the empire's dispersed vassal states were semi-independent, the central *daʿwah* in North Africa appears to have ensured that these states operated under the framework and policies issued from the Fāṭimid headquarters. By the tenth century, the Islamic world stretched more or less from North Africa to Tibet, and news travelled

⁹ For a detailed discussion of this subject, see Maclean, *Religion and Society* (1989).

¹⁰ Hamdani, *Beginnings* (1965:3).

¹¹ Maclean, *Religion and Society* (1989:126).



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quickly, especially regarding events taking place in the central Islamic lands of Iraq and Persia.

Although at the peak of its success the Fāṭimid empire briefly extended over a vast area, the Fāṭimids never attained their ultimate goal of hegemony over the Islamic world. They did not succeed in overthrowing the caliph in Baghdad and in uniting the Muslim world under a Shīʿah *imām-khalif*. Indeed, soon after the Fāṭimid conquest of Egypt (969 C.E.) and the transference of the caliphate to Cairo from Ifrīqiya (Tunisia, where the Fāṭimid caliphate was first proclaimed in 909 C.E.), the resources of the *daʿwah* were spent in a constant struggle to maintain and consolidate lands already existing under the Fāṭimid empire.

From the start, the Fāṭimid caliphate faced internal and external challenges. We will focus here on those problems that were to be of some consequence to the Ismāʿīlīs in Sind. The birth of the Fāṭimid state was marked by internal dissention. In 899 C.E., Ḥamdān Qarmāṭ, a powerful Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* who had won a considerable Ismāʿīlī following in lower Iraq, broke off from the *daʿwah*, then centred in Syria, when the Fāṭimid caliph ʿUbayd Allāh declared himself the *imām*. According to Ḥamdān Qarmāṭ, ʿUbayd Allāh's claim repudiated the Ismāʿīlī belief that Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl would return as the *mahdī* (messiah) and institute truth and justice in the world. His faction, named Qarmāṭī after him, refused to accept that ʿUbayd was the expected *mahdī* and condemned the claims of the Fāṭimid caliphs to the imāmate, which the Qarmāṭīs maintained had come to an end with Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl.¹²

This defection proved fatal in the long run to the Fāṭimid goal of capturing the eastern heartlands of Islam where the ʿAbbāsids were centred. Although the Caliph al-Muʿizz

¹² Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:125).



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(ruled 953–975 C.E.) made special efforts to regain the allegiance of the Qarmaṭīs and had some success in Khurāsān, Sīstān and Mukrān, dissenting groups continued their vigorous *daʿwah* activities in lower Iraq, Daylamān, Ādharbayjān and Baḥrayn. They succeeded in thwarting several attempts by the Fāṭimids to secure Syria fully, from which base the latter might have launched a successful attack on Baghdad. Ironically, although the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs and the Qarmaṭīs were foes at the time, in relation to the Sunnī ʿAbbāsids both sects were subversive elements and pro-ʿAlid. Thus, Sunnī writers and chroniclers regularly but erroneously identified the two by the same label, namely, “Qarmaṭī,” and the Fāṭimids were invariably blamed for Qarmaṭī excesses such as the latter’s desecration of Mecca and the slaughter of pilgrims in 930 C.E.

That the influence of the Qarmaṭīs was far-reaching is attested to by the views held by an unknown *dāʿī* in Sind, who caused considerable concern to the Fāṭimid caliph, al-Muʿizz. While few details are known about the actual operation of the early Fāṭimid *daʿwah* in Sind, some evidence exists that gives an impression of its approach, and both its gains and losses. An interesting incident survives about one of al-Haytham’s successors, an anonymous *dāʿī* who worked in Sind between 941–958 C.E. during the reign of al-Muʿizz. This *dāʿī* had succeeded in converting a Muslim prince¹³ in the region, as well as a large group of non-Muslims described by Nuʿmān in his *Majālis waʿl Musāyarāt* as *majūs* (Zoroastrians; in this case, more likely, a reference to Hindu sun-worshippers). However, the *dāʿī*’s beliefs and methods of conversion stirred up considerable controversy at the Fāṭimid headquarters.

According to the famous Fāṭimid *qāḍī*, al-Nuʿmān, the *dāʿī* introduced the following “reprehensible innovation” to accomplish his task:

¹³ Probably an ʿUmarī ʿAlid, cf. Maclean, *Religion and Society* (1989:132).



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He won a great number of Zoroastrians (*majūs*) for the *daʿwa*, while they were still keeping their religion and had not previously become Muslims. He allowed them to follow their earlier practices.¹⁴

Apparently, the Caliph al-Muʿizz “did not like the *majūs* retaining their old views and thought the *dāʿī* heretical and disloyal for holding that the Fāṭimids were of Qaddāhid origins.”¹⁵ Obviously, this unnamed *dāʿī* had incurred the displeasure of al-Muʿizz for two reasons: firstly, for improperly converting the *majūs*, and secondly, for holding heretical views concerning the Fāṭimid caliph’s claim to the imāmate.¹⁶

As Nanji explains, Fāṭimid territories were widely scattered and posed a challenge to the central *daʿwah* in North Africa which attempted to

provide a common basis for their heterogenous and widely-scattered adherents. The diversity of such adherents was potentially a seed-bed of a wide variety of heterodox beliefs, particularly in the case of Sind, where the converts brought with them a deeply-rooted background of wide practices.¹⁷

Thus, al-Muʿizz disapproved of the *dāʿī*’s concessionary and tolerant methods for spreading the *daʿwah*, and insisted on a more faithful adherence to Islamic practice and tradition. It appears that the conversion to the Ismāʿīlī cause was conceived as a two-step process. First the convert became a Muslim and only then, s/he swore allegiance to the Ismāʿīlī imāms. In any case, the breach was serious enough that the *daʿwah* planned to remove the *dāʿī*, but he died in a riding accident, and the matter was closed.

14 Samuel M. Stern, “Heterodox Ismāʿilism at the time of al-Muʿizz,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 17 (1955) 15.

15 Hamdani, *Beginnings* (1965:2, n.12). See following page for an explanation of Qaddāhid.

16 Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:180). Of course, it was also possible that the *dāʿī*’s leniency would have been tolerated had it not been for his Qarmaṭī-like views on the nature of the office of al-Muʿizz’s and his Fāṭimid forebears. It seems that the *dāʿī* taught that the Fāṭimid caliphs were successors of the *dāʿī* Maymūn al-Qaddāh, and that the *qāʾim* or Imām-messiah would appear during the reign of al-Muʿizz. For more details, see Maclean, *Religion and Society* (1989:133).

17 Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978:35).



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Based on the official exchanges between the centre in North Africa and the *daʿwah* in Sind, what this incident underscores is that the Fāṭimid *daʿwah* discouraged any form of syncretism or compromise either in practice or doctrine.

The deviant *dāʿī* was succeeded in 965 C.E. by Jalam b. Shaybān who, ending the dynastic rule of the Banū Sāma, secured Fāṭimid rule in Multān and openly proclaimed the sovereignty of al-Muʿizz.¹⁸ For four decades (965–1005 C.E.), the *khuṭba* (Friday sermon) in Multān was recited in the name of the Fāṭimid caliphs, displacing their rivals, the ʿAbbāsids of Baghdad. The Fāṭimid Caliph al-Muʿizz wrote to Shaybān praising him for his victory, but also commending him for destroying an idol and its temple, and building a mosque at the site.¹⁹ Maclean has ably argued that this could not possibly have been a reference to the famous sun-temple in Multān and notes that “In any case, it is clear that the Ismāʿīlīs of Multān did not pursue a policy of temple or image destruction.”²⁰ Even if, as Maclean suggests, the letter from al-Muʿizz had propagandist motives, what is worth noting is the caliph's official approval of Jalam's strict prohibition of Hindu elements in keeping with his denunciation of the syncretic and more compromising attitude of Jalam's predecessor. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that at the earliest stage of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* in the subcontinent, indigenization and religious accommodation were not part of its conversion strategy. On the contrary, the official policy of the *daʿwah* seems to have positively discouraged assimilation of local elements.

The other constant challenge faced by the Fāṭimid caliphate was opposition to ʿAlid claims by the ʿAbbāsīd caliphate that was bolstered first by the Shīʿī Būyids and later,

¹⁸ Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:180).

¹⁹ Samuel M. Stern, “Ismāʿīlī Propaganda and Fatimid Rule in Sind” *Islamic Culture* XXIII (1949) 301.

²⁰ Maclean, *Religion and Society* (1989:137).



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the Sunnī Saljūq Turks. As we have noted, by the time that the Fāṭimids came to power, the Ismāʿīlīs had developed the elaborate organization of the *daʿwah* to rally support for their *imāms*' claims. The *daʿwah* continued its activities in earnest during the Fāṭimid period, and small gains were made in Iraq and Persia. Its activities, which included the prolific writings of contemporary Fāṭimid *dāʿīs*, revived interest in Ismāʿīlism among pro-Shīʿīs such as the Twelvers. Rulers of a few towns in ʿAbbāsīd territories began to transfer their allegiance to the Fāṭimid caliph, al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (ruled 996–1021 C.E.), and were subsequently threatened by the ʿAbbāsīd caliph al-Qādir. Fearing the growing Fāṭimid influence in the region, al-Qādir launched an anti-Ismāʿīlī propaganda campaign in 1010 C.E. and invited the theologians and scholars of Baghdad to prepare a manifesto discrediting the Fāṭimid caliph's claim to being a descendant of ʿAlī. This declaration of the Fāṭimids as imposters and the Ismāʿīlīs as heretics was read in mosques throughout the ʿAbbāsīd empire. Al-Qādir also commissioned the leading Sunnī theologians of Baghdad to write works condemning the Fāṭimids and Ismāʿīlī teachings.²¹

While one cannot say without more detailed historical investigations that al-Qādir's manifesto *directly* led to the killing of Ismāʿīlīs, it is worth noting that after the manifesto, they began to occur with increasing frequency. Certainly, the manifesto sanctioned anti-Ismāʿīlī aggression in the Islamic heartlands and set into motion a wave of anti-Ismāʿīlī currents. It may not be a coincidence that the Ismāʿīlīs in Sind were massacred by Maḥmūd Ghaznawī the same year that Baghdad issued the manifesto against the Fāṭimids. In Ifrīqiya, Ismāʿīlīs were increasingly persecuted by Sunnī Berbers, a fact which culminated in the attack and massacre of the Ismāʿīlīs of

²¹ Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:194).



Qayrawān, Tripoli, Mahdiyyah and Tunis in 1016 C.E.²² Three decades later the Fāṭimids permanently lost Ifrīqiya when the local Zīrid rulers transferred their allegiance to the ʿAbbasids in 1048 C.E.

Another development that occurred at this time, weakening the Fāṭimids and affecting the Ismāʿīlīs in Sind, was a controversy over the Fāṭimid caliph, al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh. Towards the latter half of his reign (996–1021 C.E.), some *dāʿīs* began to preach the divinity of al-Ḥākim. The official Fāṭimid *daʿwah* vigorously opposed this interpretation and summoned its esteemed *dāʿī* al-Kirmānī to Egypt to compose treatises refuting such extremist ideas. al-Ḥākim himself became reclusive and spartan towards the end of his life and mysteriously disappeared in 1021 C.E. While Kirmānī's writings were widely circulated and seem to have helped to check the spread of these doctrines, the dissident *dāʿīs* clung to their ideas and formed the Druze religion, winning a small following in Syria. They actively proselytized between the years 1021–1043 C.E. after which time neither conversion nor apostasy was allowed. During this short time, however, the Druze *daʿwah* extended its reach as far as Sind, for in 1033 C.E., soon after the massacre of the Ismāʿīlīs in Multān, the Druze leader, al-Muqtanaʿ, wrote to the Fāṭimid *dāʿī* Sūmar Rājābāl to lend his support to their cause. Although the Fāṭimid *daʿwah* disowned Druze ideas, the latter's teachings concerning the divinity of al-Ḥākim merely added fuel to Sunnī antipathy for the Ismāʿīlīs. That negative Ismāʿīlī stereotypes continued to flourish and spread to all corners of the Islamic lands is attested to by the massacre of Ismāʿīlīs as far away as Bukhārā and Transoxiana under the Qarakhānid ruler, Bugrā Khān, in 1044 C.E.²³

²² Ibid., 191.

²³ Ibid., 213.



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Meanwhile, the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī state in Sind had not survived for long. In 976 C.E., the Ghaznawid leader Amīr Sebūktigin attacked India. He invaded part of western Sind and forced the Hindu king Jaypāl out of his Hindūshāhī territory, annexing the region extending from Kābul to Peshāwar. Rulers of Mukrān, the region adjacent to Sind on the southwest side, also transferred their allegiance to Sebūktigin. The Ismāʿīlīs of Multān were thus vulnerable to Ghaznawid forces on the whole western flank. Multān was subsequently invaded, but its ruler, the *dāʿī* Shaikh Ḥamīd, succeeded in securing a truce with Sebūktigin.²⁴

Unlike his father, however, Sebūktigin's successor Maḥmūd Ghaznawī was a sworn enemy of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs. He continued his father's advance on India, and in 1001 C.E., defeated Jaypāl's forces in Peshawar. Three years later, he conquered the Hindu ruler of Bhāṭiyah, a region east of Multān. Fearing Multān would be next in the order of attack, its Fāṭimid governor Abū al-Faṭḥ Dāʿūd b. Naṣr entered into a defense alliance with Anandpāl, successor of the Hindūshāhī king, Jaypāl. This alliance may also have included other Indian dynasties of the northwest.²⁵

In 1005 C.E., Maḥmūd Ghaznawī invaded Multān with the avowed purpose of defending Sunnī orthodoxy and purging the Ismāʿīlīs from the region for their alleged apostacy. Anandpāl attempted to block his advance to Multān but was defeated. Ismāʿīlī forces capitulated after withstanding the Ghaznawid attack for a week. Fined an indemnity of twenty million dirhams, Dāʿūd b. Naṣr was made a tributary to the Ghaznawid *suḷṭān*. In four years, however, Maḥmūd returned, and in 1010 C.E. he captured and imprisoned Dāʿūd and brutally massacred the Ismāʿīlīs in Multān and

²⁴ Hamdani, *Beginnings* (1965:4).

²⁵ Maclean, *Religion and Society* (1989:138).



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surrounding areas. Contemporary reports describe this mass genocide that included various kinds of mutilation and bloodshed.²⁶

It is striking that Maḥmūd of Ghazna attacked the Ismāʿīlīs of Multān in 1010 C.E., the same year as al-Qādir's anti-Fāṭimid manifesto, and massacred them expressly to purge these so-called apostates from *dār al-islām*. Maclean rightly points out that, "Through his actions in Multān, Maḥmūd could emphasize (vis-à-vis the Shīʿī Daylamites) his role as the primary defender of Sunnī orthodoxy within the ʿAbbāsīd empire, a basis for the legitimization of Ghaznawid rule."²⁷ Indeed, this pattern of expunging Ismāʿīlīs to win caliphal approval and territorial authority became typical, and was used with equal success by the Saljūqs, Ghūrīds and Mongols (more precisely, the Īl-Khāns once the latter had converted to Islam), as well.

Around the same time, another local ruler of Sind based in Maṣṣūrah, a Ḥabbārīd Arab whose name was probably Khafīf, is said to have converted to Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism.²⁸ It is also likely that after the Multān massacre, what remained of the Ismāʿīlī population became concentrated in al-Maṣṣūrah which already had a large ʿAlid community. Knowing that his state was also vulnerable to Maḥmūd's invasion, the Ḥabbārīd Arab ruler seems to have allied his forces with the remaining Arab Ismāʿīlīs. Whether or not the Ḥabbārīds actually proclaimed the Fāṭimid creed, Maṣṣūrah became the centre of Ismāʿīlī activity for the next fifteen years. In 1026 C.E., however, the combined forces of the Ismāʿīlīs and Ḥabbārīds were completely crushed when Maḥmūd Ghaznawī, on

²⁶ Ibid., 139. See n. 39 which relates that according to Mubārak Shāh, "so many Ismāʿīlīs were killed at Multān that a stream of blood flowed through the Lahore Gate and Maḥmūd's hand stuck to the hilt of the sword."

²⁷ Ibid., 139.

²⁸ Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:180).



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his return from his infamous desecration of the Hindu temples of Somnāth, annexed al-Manṣūrah and Lower Sind, thus bringing to a close the era of Arab rule in Sind.

Subsequent to the conquest of the Sunnī Ghaznawids, anyone mildly suspected of Ismāʿīlī connections was killed. Maḥmūd's own *vazīr* (minister) Hasnak, who accepted a cloak from the Fāṭimid Caliph al-ʿAzīz in Egypt, was put to death in 1032 C.E. by Maḥmūd's son and successor, Masʿūd allegedly for conspiring with the Ismāʿīlīs. The Ghaznawid attack left the Ismāʿīlī community in Sind in complete disarray. During this uncertain period, rival Ismāʿīlī interests surfaced. There is, for instance, the epistle mentioned earlier from the Druze leader, al-Muqtanaʿ, in 1033 C.E. to the *shaykh* Ibn Sūmar Rājābāl "asking him to espouse the Druze cause."²⁹ That Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī activity still continued is evidenced by letters written to the *daʿwah* in Yaman by the Caliph al-Mustanṣir (d.1094 C.E.) that confirm appointments of *dāʿīs* for Sind.³⁰ Thus, for instance, according to traditions preserved by the Bohorās, a subject of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs in Sind, a certain *dāʿī* called ʿAbd Allāh was sent from Yaman in 1067 C.E. and allegedly succeeded in converting the Rājput king of Gujarat, Jayasingh Siddharāj (1094–1143 C.E.) in Anhilwāḍa Pāṭan.³¹

A few observations can be made about this early period of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* in Sind. Before the arrival of the Ghaznawids, it seems that the Arabs in Sind, whether Sunnī or Shīʿah, lived in relative accord. Their relations appear to have been cemented by a common livelihood of exports and trade, Arab culture and ethnicity, and the faith of Islam. It is interesting to note that unlike the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs, the early Sunnī Arab rulers of Sind made no effort to convert the local populace perhaps for fear of loss of

²⁹ Hamdani, *Beginnings* (1965:8).

³⁰ John N. Hollister, *The Shia of India* (London: Luzac & Co., 1953), 267.

³¹ Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978:58).



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the higher class status they enjoyed as a result of revenues (*kharāj* or land taxes) that were levied higher for non-Muslims than non-Arab Muslims (called *mawālī*).³² As Maclean has convincingly argued, the significant conversion of Sind's Buddhists to Islam had a basis in their experience of economic deprivation relative to the Arab merchants and aristocrats.³³

The Fāṭimid *daʿwah* appears to have focused its efforts on first winning the support of pro-ʿAlīd Arab Muslim compatriots and then winning over local Hindu chiefs. That is, early Fāṭimid power in both Multān and Maṣūrah was linked to an Arab Muslim base, and Fāṭimid rule was established either by converting existing Arab Muslim rulers or by securing political alliances with them. There is no indication that the Sunnīs and Shīʿah of Upper Sind harboured overt hostilities. On the other hand, it was not until the devastation of Multān that the Arab Ḥabbārīds of al-Maṣūrah joined ranks with the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs. This alliance (or allegiance) was undoubtedly motivated by the desire to protect the Arabs of Sind against their Turkish aggressors. Ethnicity and vested interests thus combined to form solidarity, subordinating the question of religious affiliation.

With the Ghaznawid invasion under Amīr Sebūktigin around 980 C.E., the whole pattern of power in the region of Sind was altered. Although the Ghaznawids expressed special antipathy for the Ismāʿīlīs in order to endear themselves to the caliphate in Baghdad, practically no ruler in the region of northwestern India was spared Ghaznawid aggression. This included the Hindu states adjacent to Multān which were also attacked in the name of Islam as being comprised of infidels. To

³² Ansar Zahid, "Isma'ilism in Multan and Sind," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 23 (1975) 37.

³³ Maclean, *Religion and Society* (1989:22-77).



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protect themselves, the Fāṭimids of Multān struck up alliances with both Hindu and Sunni Arab rulers in the region. While this joining of interests did not ultimately succeed in defeating the Ghaznawids, it must certainly have opened up a new chapter of close relations between the Ismāʿīlīs and Hindu chieftains, especially once the Arab base that the Fāṭimids had formerly built upon was destroyed by the successive massacres undertaken by Maḥmūd Ghaznawī.

As we have noted, the Multān and al-Manṣūrah massacres left the Fāṭimid *daʿwah* in disarray. The Druze split in Cairo reverberated in Sind and must have caused further confusion. It is most likely that the Hindus and Ismāʿīlīs of Upper Sind fled south from the Ghaznawids, and took cover in the region called Thaṭṭa among the local Sindhi tribes. The chiefs of these formerly Hindu tribes had long intermarried with Arab settlers; over time, they had made influential connections through kinship relations, thereby securing wealth and land.³⁴ However, they had retained certain Hindu customs such as commensality, thus declining to take meals with outsiders. It is from this group that the Sūmrah dynasty emerged. Evidently some Sūmrahs had already converted to Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlism since Shaykh Sūmar Rājībāl, who probably belonged to this Sindhi tribe, was addressed as the chief *dāʿī* by the Druze from whom he received an epistle to espouse their cause.

Hamdani believes, moreover, that the early Sūmrah rulers had close contacts with the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* after the Ghaznawid devastation of Multān and al-Manṣūrah, and that after the Fāṭimid schism following al-Mustanṣir in 1094 C.E., they threw their support behind the Nizārīs,³⁵ rather than dissident Ismāʿīlī causes such as the Druze or Qarmaṭī. Over time, intermarriages may have occurred between the Ismāʿīlīs and

³⁴ Hamdani, *Beginnings* (1965:8).
³⁵ Ibid., 15.



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Hindus who fled from Upper Sind and the local population that was already of mixed Hindu and Arab Muslim lineage. In fact, the seeds of incorporating Hindu elements into Ismāʿīlī identity, which is at the heart of the community later called Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, may well have been sown in the fertile ground of the Sūmrahs with its tradition of intermarriage, trade and political alliance between Hindus and Arab Ismāʿīlīs.

Within two decades of Maḥmūd's attack, the Sūmrahs repossessed lower Sind from the Ghaznawids in 1051 C.E. and ruled for about three centuries. Sūmar Rājībāl, referred to as the chief *dāʿī* of Multān in the Druze epistle (1033 C.E.), and his successors made concentrated efforts to regain the areas of Multān and al-Manṣūrah, probably using lower Sind as their base. Although existing evidence tends to support the Ismāʿīlī affiliations of the Sūmrahs, it is interesting that contemporary Sunnī writers do not accuse them of Ismāʿīlī (or Qarmaṭī) connections, but they do note that the Sūmrahs retained many Hindu customs.³⁶ As much of the Arab base of the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī forces in Upper Sind was destroyed by the Ghaznawid attacks, it is possible that given a context of intense anti-Ismāʿīlī hostilities, the Sūmrahs did not make a point of declaring their Ismāʿīlī connections. This may have been viewed as an application of *taqīyah* by the Fāṭimid *daʿwah*. Due to the political events in Sind, the Fāṭimid centre in Cairo no doubt felt it necessary to relax somewhat the stringent requirement that the Indian *daʿwah* conform to strictly Islamic practice and tradition. At any rate, the continued practice of Hindu customs, thanks to the Hindu origins of the Sindhi tribes that evolved into the Sūmrah dynasty, and the practice of dissimulation are ways to explain why the Sūmrahs were not immediately suspected of Ismāʿīlī sympathies.

³⁶ Maclean, *Religion and Society* (1989:142).



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We shall return to the history of Sind shortly, but first we must examine other events occurring in the larger Ismāʿīlī world. It was during the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh's long reign of some sixty years (1036–1094 C.E) that internal rivalries within the Fāṭimid state came to a head and ultimately led to its demise. Court intrigues between his ministers and rivalries among the Berbers, Turks, Arabs and Daylamīs in the Fāṭimid army culminated in open warfare in Cairo in 1062 C.E. Egypt also faced an economic crisis when famine and food shortages resulted after seven years of drought between 1065–1072 C.E. The Fāṭimid caliphate was considerably weakened by these internal problems.

In the meanwhile, as the Islamic heartlands were being subdued by the Saljūqs who defeated the Ghaznawids in 1038 C.E., the Fāṭimid *daʿwah* was making progress in scattered areas of Iraq and Persia. Once again, fearing the Ismāʿīlīs' growing influence, the ʿAbbāsīd caliphate sponsored another anti-Fāṭimid manifesto in 1052 C.E. The Saljūqs, declaring themselves champions of Sunnī Islam, successfully advanced on to Baghdad and in 1055 C.E. effectively won the ʿAbbāsīd capital from the Shīʿī Būyids. When Ṭughril was declared *sulṭān* in 1056 C.E. by the ʿAbbāsīd caliph, al-Qāʾim, he announced his plans to destroy the Shīʿī Fāṭimids in Egypt and Syria. However, *daʿwah* activities had peaked during the time of al-Mustanṣir under the astute direction of his *dāʿī*, al-Muʾayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, and the very year after Ṭughril became *sulṭān*, pro-Fāṭimid Turks under their leader, al-Basāsīrī, took over Baghdad where for a brief spell of two years the *khuṭba* was pronounced in the name of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh.³⁷

³⁷ Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:205).



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This success in Baghdad, though short-lived, must have been exuberantly celebrated across the Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī domain for it marked for the first time after the caliphate of Ḥazrat ʿAlī, a historical realisation of the *imām's* rightful position over the Islamic *ummah*. It should be noted that the seizure of Baghdad (1057 C.E.) came soon after the repossession of Lower Sind by the Sūmrahs (1051 C.E.), and the latter must have been considerably cheered by this event. Now, it is interesting to note that in the *gināns* of Pīr Shams, a prominent theme is the promise of help from Iraq or the West, and it may be speculated whether this is, in fact, a remnant of the memory of this victory.

At any rate, by 1060 C.E., the Saljuqs had conquered Fāṭimid Syria, and in 1070 C.E., the custodians of Mecca abolished the Shīʿī *adhān* (call to prayer), pronouncing the *khuṭba* for the ʿAbbāsīd caliph and the Saljūq *sultān*, thus effectively ending Fāṭimid rule in the Hijāz. Clearly, the territorial extension of the Fāṭimids was in rapid decline. In Yaman, however, the *daʿwah* succeeded in winning the support of the Ṣulayḥīd dynasty. The Ṣulayḥīd Queen, al-Malika al-Sayyida, maintained close relations with Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustaṣṣir and supervised renewed efforts to strengthen the *daʿwah* in India. Henceforth, the Ṣulayḥīds remained in charge of the *daʿwah* in India, selecting and dispatching *dāʿīs* there with al-Mustaṣṣir's approval. We have noted, for instance, that the *dāʿī* ʿAbd Allāh and others were sent to Gujarat from Yaman in 1067 C.E.³⁸

By the end of al-Mustaṣṣir's life, however, the Fāṭimids were under constant attack in the Islamic east, and the situation in Cairo had considerably deteriorated. In 1072 C.E., the head of the Persian *daʿwah* in Iṣfahān, ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAṭṭāsh, appointed Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ as *dāʿī*. The Fāṭimid *daʿwah* in Persia, which maintained close contact with

³⁸ Ibid., 210; Hollister, *The Shia of India* (1953:267).



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the chief *dā'i* Badr al-Jamālī in Cairo, had won small pockets of supporters from Kirmān to Ādharbayjān. Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ intensified efforts to establish a military base in Daylamān, which culminated in the capture of the virtually impregnable fortress of Alamūt in 1090 C.E. This date would mark in retrospect the beginning of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī state and a policy of open revolt against the Saljūq regime.³⁹

The Saljūq empire was consolidated during the reign of Arp Arslān (1063–1073 C.E.) with the help of his *vazīr*, the celebrated Nizām al-Mulk. After Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ captured Alamūt, Nizām, a sworn enemy of the Ismā'īlīs, ordered the general Abū Muṣlīm to kill Ḥasan. Abū Muṣlīm did not succeed and was himself later killed by an Ismā'īlī in 1095 C.E. However, with the support of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, the *vazīr* engineered more anti-Fāṭimid propaganda in Baghdad and himself wrote against the Ismā'īlīs or the *bāṭiniyya* in his *Siyāsāt-nāma*. His fear was not misplaced for after encouraging Malikshāh to order armies against the Ismā'īlīs of Quhistān and Rūdbār in 1092 C.E., Nizām al-Mulk was assassinated the same year by Abū Ṭāhir Arrānī, the first Ismā'īlī *fidā'i* (one who risks one's life for the *da'wah*). The most serious and sophisticated denunciation of the Ismā'īlīs, however, came from the pen of the famous Sunnī theologian, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 C.E.), who at the request of al-Mustazhir, Malikshāh's successor, composed a treatise in 1094 C.E. known as *al-Mustazhiri* which systematically refuted the doctrines of the Bāṭinīs (believers in the *bāṭin* or esoteric, hidden meaning of the Revelation).⁴⁰

Indeed, the year 1094 C.E. was to mark another cleavage in Ismā'īlī history. al-Mustazhir died that year, and the Fāṭimid *da'wah* split into two branches. The Fāṭimid Ismā'īlīs in Syria and Persia threw their support behind the Fāṭimid caliph's elder son

³⁹ Ibid., 336–340.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 220, 341–2.



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Nizār and came to be known as the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs. The younger al-Mustaʿlī, however, was installed as his successor to the throne in Cairo, and when Nizār revolted, al-Mustaʿlī had him killed. Thenceforth, the Persian Ismāʿīlīs effectively cut all relations with Cairo, referring to themselves as *al-daʿwa al-jadīda*, the new mission or teaching. Yaman, however, remained faithful to the Fātimid caliph, al-Mustaʿlī; and as the Ṣulayhids had supervised the *daʿwah* in the Indian subcontinent, presumably they influenced loyalties in Sind. The question is, therefore, whom did the Sūmrahs support? Hamdānī is convinced that they allied themselves with the Nizārī *daʿwah* since, as the later Satpanth tradition shows, the Nizārīs were more accommodating of local customs, whereas the Ṭayyibī Bohrās, directed from Yaman, were not assimilative. To this we might add that the Sūmrahs may also have preferred the Nizārīs because, unlike the non-political Ṭayyibī Bohrās, they were politically active and from Alamūt, wielded the powers of a scattered state.

Relations of the Nizārī State in Alamūt with Political Events in Sind and the Formation of Satpanth

Marshall Hodgson's classic work on the Nizārīs reveals in detail their quest for an independent state.⁴¹ Between 1090 C.E., when Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ seized Alamūt, and 1256 C.E., when Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh surrendered it to the Mongols, the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs struggled to maintain a confederation of self-governed states amidst an intensely hostile Sunnī environment. As we have noted, by the time of the Nizārī-Mustaʿlī split, the Fātimid Ismāʿīlīs were regularly subjected to persecution, and their doctrines were publicly refuted and vilified. The Ismāʿīlīs were widely denounced as

⁴¹ Marshall G. Hodgson, *The Order of the Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs Against the Islamic World* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1955).



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mulāhida (heretics) or *ḥashīshiyya* (assassins and/or smokers of ḥashīsh),⁴² and the Sunnī overlords, whether Saljūqid or Ghaznawid, had license to attack and destroy the Ismāʿīlīs at will.

This period of Islamic history has been noted for its volatility, political fragmentation, constantly shifting loyalties, and warring independent kingdoms. Under the system of *iqṭāʿ* or land grants instituted by Nizām al-Mulk, the *sulṭān* had parcelled out the Saljūq empire to *amīrs* or commanders from whom revenues were collected.⁴³ The Saljūq *amīrs* were themselves in constant battle to expand their own vassal states. They were also embroiled in intrigues over the sulṭānate, so that the heartlands of the Islamic world were more or less in a constant state of confusion and civil war. In this context of widespread chaos and Sunnī enmity, the Nizārīs developed their own program of revolt. As Daftary explains, “The Persian Ismāʿīlīs adopted precisely such a piecemeal strategy in their efforts to subdue the Saljūq domains, locality by locality, stronghold by stronghold, and leader by leader.”⁴⁴

Following the atomized nature of power in the region, the Nizārī response was to capture discrete strongholds and towns and form a network or cluster of fortresses or *dār al-hijrahs* (places of refuge) that they fortified and defended. While widely dispersed, these various Nizārī outposts were centrally co-ordinated from Alamūt so that, in contrast to the Saljūq empire, a distinctive feature of this decentralized Nizārī state was its cohesion and precise co-ordination of revolt. Nizārī methods of securing key strongholds across the region demonstrated variety, if not expediency of means, a

42 For a discussion of this, see Hodgson, *Order of the Assassins* (1955:133–137).

43 For an incisive analysis of the *iqṭāʿ* system and the social disorder it bred, see Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 2, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 49–55.

44 Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:352).



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characteristic that would be manifest again in their approach to the *daʿwah* in India. Their methods ranged from diplomacy and conversion to military manoeuvres and assassination. It was this last strategy, however, for which they would become renowned, abhorred and truly feared.

While murder for political advantage or power was not uncommon among the rival Turkish dynasties of this period, the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs acquired an extraordinary reputation for their assassinations, which Marshall Hodgson argues were neither random nor senseless, but carefully calculated attacks whose motives were “usually very specific defense or retaliation.”⁴⁵ Be that as it may, the stealth, suddenness of attack, and highly selective and prominent targets of the suicidal missions of the Nizārī *fidāʿīs* earned them a dreadful reputation. Already beleaguered by persecution and hatred, the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs who had perfected this technique and used it “successfully,” drew the terrible consequences of repeated mass murder of Ismāʿīlīs in retaliation, and the consistent levelling of blame against them when the agents of other assassinations were unknown. As Hodgson sums up,

The reaction of the Muslim community at large to the Nizārī threat was violent and unanimous. All who did not share in the Nizārī revolt—Twelver Shīʿahs as well as Sunnī—united to resist it. . . . The violence of the reaction . . . [was] expressed at its fullest in the recurrent massacres of Nizārī colonies.⁴⁶

It is not necessary to list here the succession of massacres, sometimes in retaliation for assassinations, sometimes in battle over strongholds, but more frequently as a matter of course, that the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs suffered in Persia.⁴⁷ The point is that although the

⁴⁵ Hodgson, *Order of the Assassins* (1955:112).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁴⁷ In 1091, Yūrūn Tāsh massacred Ismāʿīlīs around Alamūt, Rūdbār, and Quhistān; in 1093 C.E., the Ismāʿīlīs in Iṣfahān were massacred and thrown into the bonfire, an act repeated in 1101 C.E.; also in 1101, Barkiyāruq and Sanjar massacred Ismāʿīlīs in Quhistān; in 1107 C.E. Shāhdiz was seized by Tapa and



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Nizārīs withstood the Saljūqs and later the Khwārazmians in western Persia for 166 years, it is likely that by the time of the Mongol invasion, their numbers had, in fact, considerably dwindled.

To be sure, the situation of the Ismāʿīlīs was already delicate and vulnerable when they captured Alamūt in 1090 C.E. The split following al-Mustanʿir's death four years later left the Ismāʿīlīs in Persia with a smaller fund of human resources to draw upon. This attenuated situation was to be followed by a century and a half of sustained warfare and bloodshed. The Nizārīs withstood these attacks mainly as a result of astute leadership and remarkable internal unity and cohesion, but it is reasonable to surmise that in terms of numbers, the Nizārīs were fast becoming a diminishing minority. Nonetheless, with their impressive scattered fortresses and strongholds in northern Persia in the highlands of Daylamān, Rūdbār and Qūhistān, and the regions of Kirmān and Sīstān, they still represented a seat of power for the larger Ismāʿīlī world, including the Ismāʿīlīs in Sind.

It is not relevant here to detail the course of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah*, but it is important to ask to what extent this new dispensation, as it declared itself to be, continued to cherish the long-held Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī goal of Shīʿī hegemony over the Islamic world. More pointedly, did the Nizārī *daʿwah* still envision this to be a realistic goal? It is clear that the most immediate purpose of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and his successors was to establish an independent Nizārī state. At least such a state would ensure that the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs had a safe harbour, the liberty and autonomy for self-rule, and a place in which to give shape to their own vision of society. Yet, surely this aim represented a retreat from the ideal of supremacy over the *ummah*. Given the circumstances, a

the Nizārīs destroyed; between 1109–1118, Alamūt was under seige by Shīrgir; in 1124 C.E. 700 Nizārīs were massacred at Āmid; etc; these killings followed a vicious cycle, with greater or lesser frequency. cf. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:340–341; 354–363; 404–405).



reorientation of goals had to have taken place during the Nizārī period: empire building was replaced *de facto* by the more attainable goal of a self-governed Ismāʿīlī state. But how did the Nizārīs accept the fact that their ideal of presiding over *dār al-islām* may have failed and, more importantly, how did they face the realization that this goal had perhaps altogether gone out of reach? Accordingly, how did *al-daʿwa al-jadīda* reshape the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī quest for sovereignty and justice?

It is possible to find answers to these questions in the development of Nizārī Ismāʿīlī leadership and ideology. As noted earlier, Nizār, the elder son of al-Mustaʿşir, was killed soon after his younger brother, al-Mustaʿli, became caliph. According to later Nizārī sources, Nizār's infant son or grandson was smuggled out of Cairo and secretly delivered to Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ at Alamūt where the former and his sons lived in anonymity.⁴⁸ In the *imām's* absence, Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ came to occupy the high rank of *hujjah* or proof of the *imām's* existence. Hodgson points out, however, that neither Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ nor his two successors at Alamūt actually named any *imāms* after Nizār, and that there is no indication of an official doctrine at the time that the *imāms* were in hiding or that the heads of Alamūt were in secret contact with them.⁴⁹ Rather, *Haft Bāb-i Bāba Sayyidnā*, a work attributed to Ḥasan-i Şabbāḥ, predicts the coming of the *Qā'im* who would bring justice and truth to the world and complete the cycle of *imāmah*. This was a typical Ismāʿīlī and general Shīʿī position that had come to be invoked regularly when an *imām's* physical presence was unknown. Hodgson discusses this issue at length and doubts that Nizār had successors at Alamūt, suggesting instead that the story of hidden *imāms* with whom the *khudāwands* or lords of Alamūt were in secret contact was a later fabrication.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the fact is that

⁴⁸ Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:350).

⁴⁹ Hodgson, *Order of the Assassins* (1955:66).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 62–68.



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in 1164 C.E., the fourth head of Alamūt, Muḥammad Buzurg Ummīd's son, Ḥasan II, declared himself to be not a *dā'ī* or *hujjah*, but the hidden and anticipated *imām* who would bring justice on earth. (It is important to note that this is also a prominent theme in the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams, namely, that the *imām* is the long-awaited tenth saviour or *avatār* of Vaiṣṇavism who will rescue the world from the wicked and restore justice). His descendants, too, held tenaciously to this claim that they were descendants of Nizār and the Fāṭimid caliphs.⁵¹

Now what is extremely relevant to our discussion are the contrasts in ideology and policy of the heads of Alamūt who effectively exercised supreme authority over the Nizārī *da'wah* during the course of more than 150 years. As Daftary points out, Nizārī Alamūt went through three phases.⁵² The first phase (1090–1162 C.E.) was the establishment of the Nizārī state by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ whose policies were faithfully followed by his two successors. The second phase (1162–1210 C.E.) was initiated by Ḥasan II 'ala Ḍhikrihi al-Salām who claimed he was the awaited Nizārī *imām*. Ḥasan II declared the arrival of the *Qiyāmah* (Resurrection or the Last Day when humanity would be judged, and accordingly, be committed to eternal hell or paradise) and suspended all obligations of Islamic praxis or *sharī'ah*. The third phase (1210–1256 C.E.), established by Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III, consisted in a strict return to *sharī'ah* and attempts at reconciliation with the Sunnī world. Without going into details, this discussion will assess the implications of these changing orientations.⁵³

⁵¹ This includes the present Ismā'īlī *imām*, His Highness Prince Karīm Āghā Khān IV.

⁵² Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs* (1990:335).

⁵³ For specific discussions of *ta'lim* and *qiyāmah*, see Hodgson, *Order of the Assassins* (1955:52–61; 160–181).



During the first phase of Nizārī history, the practice of *sharī'ah* was strictly enforced, so much so that Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ had one of his son's killed for drinking wine!⁵⁴ The bone of contention between the Sunnī and Shī'ī worlds was not over the practice of *sharī'ah*, which evolved from the basic principles of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* as sources of divine guidance in human affairs. While the Shī'ah and the Sunnīs had different traditions of *ḥadīth* and slightly different readings of the Qur'ān, what decisively separated them was the Shī'ah insistence that absolute religious authority and the interpretation of these fundamental sources were vested only in the *imām*. The Shī'ah, and especially the Ismā'īlīs, had elaborated in different philosophical terms the special nature of interpretation or *ta'wīl* that was the prerogative only of the *imām*, at the basis of which was the principle that only he possessed knowledge of the *bāṭin*, the inner reality or essence of things. The attack against the *bāṭiniyya* by Ghazālī and others was, at heart, an attack on the notion of a singular, divinely sanctioned religious authority and, more important, on the special privileges to which such claims thus entitled the *imām*. That the guidance and the will of God were not equally accessible to all Muslims, but had to be sought through the special office of an *imām*, went against the ideal of egalitarianism in Sunnī Islam.⁵⁵

Thus, over the course of their history, the Ismā'īlīs were consistently attacked for their so-called élitist doctrines of special knowledge or teachings (*ta'lim*), which involved initiation, hierarchy, absolute allegiance, esoteric truths and so-forth. Whether as *ta'limiyya* or *bāṭiniyya*, the Ismā'īlī and general Shī'ī insistence on the imāmate as the custodian of divine secrets and of Muḥammad's *wilāyah* or proximity to God did not

⁵⁴ Ibid., 51.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of Sunnī egalitarian piety, see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. 1 (1961:315–330).



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endear them to the Sunnīs who sought more communal, consensual, and clear-cut ways of determining God's will.

Now, during the period after the death of al-Mustaṣṣir and the start of the Nizārī *daʿwah*, it seems clear from Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ's strict practice of *sharīʿah* and observance of general Islamic ordinances that the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs identified themselves with the *ummah* at large. Certainly, it would have been impossible to assert influence over the *ummah* without being in close harmony with mainstream Islamic patterns of law and worship. It is evident that during the Fāṭimid period, al-Muʿizz was acutely conscious of maintaining such a pan-Islamic identity, for the Ismāʿīlīs had to have some fundamental common ground with their co-religionists to win them over, or failing this, to be acknowledged as Muslim. Thus we see, he directed the *daʿwah* to adopt a conservative stance in propagating Ismāʿīlī doctrines and practices.

By the time Ḥasan II ʿala Ḍhikrihi al-Salām assumed leadership of the Nizārī *daʿwah*, it must have become increasingly obvious, however, that the sovereignty over the *ummah* that Ismāʿīlīs had once cherished for their cause would not come to pass any time soon. It has been suggested that the declaration of the *Qiyāmah* was thus “a spiritual rejection of the outside world,”⁵⁶ and a final rebuttal against Sunnī Islam. That is, by declaring the *Qiyāmah* and lifting the duty to observe *sharīʿah*, Ḥasan II had repudiated the “sacred law” of the Sunnīs as merely an empty shell. Rather, the true believers would be able to apprehend the truth and the will of God directly through the *imāms*. The obligations of *sharīʿah* were reconceived via *taʾwīl* or allegorical interpretation. For example, instead of performing the five daily ritual prayers, the Nizārīs were to be in constant prayer by recollecting God in their hearts. This

⁵⁶ Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:335).



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suspension of the obligation of the *sharī'ah* marked a symbolic break from the unyielding *ummah* that had rejected the Nizārī claims. At the same time, however, the declaration of the *Qiyāmah* assured the Nizārīs that a spiritual resurrection had taken place in which they had been vindicated, for only those who followed the *imām* and recognised his inner reality would know God and were privy to the *bāḥin* or spiritual realities; whereas the enemies of the *imām*, in rejecting his knowledge and guidance, had been cast into spiritual hell or non-existence.⁵⁷

Now it is worth noting that Ismā'īlī philosophers had hitherto rarely deprecated the *sharī'ah* in their works or suggested that it was merely a hollow shell concealing a superior truth. Why would Ḥasan II have made such a bold move, one that, as Hodgson observes, would have irrevocably sundered the Ismā'īlīs' relationship with the Sunnīs and other Shī'ah? As he points out, the Sunnīs would have little interest in the higher reality of spiritual awareness declared by the Resurrection, nor in the claim that Ḥasan was the *Qā'im*. (lit. "riser," the messianic *imām*) However,

they would care that now the Ismā'īlīs had in fact done that villainous deed they had been long accused of doing, thrown off the shackles of the law...and from now . . . to be called *Mulḥid*, "heretic" . . . (for) they have now rejected those universal forms of law which held the Islamic community together.⁵⁸

In fact, the disastrous consequence of this declaration was probably realised by Ḥasan's grandson Jalāl al-Dīn, less than half a century later, and at a time of threat posed by the fierce Sunni-inclined Mongols. Not only did Jalāl al-Dīn revert to the practice of *sharī'ah*, but he went so far as to identify himself and the Nizārīs as Sunnī, and successfully tried to prove this by enforcing strict standards of *sharī'ah* among his Nizārī followers.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 388.

⁵⁸ Hodgson, *Order of the Assassins* (1955:157).



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Why, then, did Ḥasan II make such an incomprehensible move? Firstly, as we have noted earlier, his father Muḥammad b. Buzurg Ummīd was the *dā'i* or lord of Alamūt, whereas Ḥasan II was claiming to be the *imām*. How was he to validate his claim? If Ḥasan II was the *imām*, he had to be the promised *Qā'im* or messiah of the **Haft Bāb-i Bāba Sayyidnā** who would bring justice and truth to earth. As we have suggested, by the time of Ḥasan II, it must have been obvious to him that the establishment of justice and truth, which meant the *imām's* supreme authority over *dār al-islām*, was a remote if not an impossible prospect. As Daftary points out,

The announcement of *qiyāma* was in fact a declaration of independence from the larger Muslim society and, at the same time, an admission of failure of the Nizārī struggle to take over that society; for the *qiyāma* declared the outside world irrelevant.⁵⁹

This is a rather remarkable retreat from the earlier Fāṭimid and Nizārī assertions of revolution to change the world and set things right. In retrospect, one may be inclined to read the *Qiyāmah* as an "admission of failure," but at the time of its declaration, it must have meant quite the opposite, namely, the ultimate success and vindication of the *da'wah*. Moreover, the abandonment of the goal of dominion over the Muslim world did not necessarily preclude a desire for the limited dominion over an Ismā'īlī state. Conceivably, Ḥasan II ʿala Ḍhikrihi al-Salām might still have been able to entertain hopes of bringing justice and truth to Ismā'īlīs by gaining control of small regions including Sind. Nonetheless, even if the declaration signalled a contraction of goals, not a complete withdrawal of political aspirations, the doctrine of *qiyāmah* marked a turning point in Ismā'īlī history.

As the promised *Qā'im*, Ḥasan had to deliver truth and justice to his followers to retain their support. He had to reward and vindicate the sacrifices of his followers at some

⁵⁹ Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs* (1990:389).



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level to support his claim as *imām*, on the one hand, as well as to fulfill their expectation that the righteous Shīʿī *imām* had been ultimately victorious. This he did by separating the physical from the spiritual, and asserting the latter to be superior; and then proclaiming a Resurrection in which the Nizārīs had won supremacy in the spiritual world. To their satisfaction then,

The Nizārīs envisaged themselves in spiritual Paradise, while condemning the non-Nizārīs to the Hell of spiritual non-existence. Now the Nizārīs had the opportunity of being collectively introduced to Paradise on earth, which was the knowledge of the unveiled truth; the Nizārī Imām was the epiphany (*mazhar*) of that unchangeable *ḥaqīqa*.⁶⁰

Ḥasan II effectively translated success from the theatre of the temporary and mundane to the more permanent and, therefore, higher realm of the spiritual. And in that realm, the Ismāʿīlīs had gained victory through their *imām*, for it was only by the recognition of his true nature that they had gained entry into Paradise or received divine felicity. The concept of *Qiyāmah* skillfully transferred the ideal of dominion over *dār al-islām* from the lower world of bodies to the higher world of souls and in some sense relieved the *imāms* of the necessity to find completion of their office in temporal terms. That is, regardless of whether the *imām* was the caliphal head of the *ummah* or not, his spiritual authority was confirmed, and he had unveiled his true reality as the *mazhar* or epiphany of God. At the same time that the political role of the *imām's* office was thus subordinated to the religious, this did not mean that the imāmate could or did not entertain any desire for land and independent rule.

The declaration of *Qiyāmah* in 1162 C.E. marked a turning point for Ismāʿīlism, essentially spiritualizing an ideal that had for centuries been objectively sought. It created an opening, a window in the space of which religious forms were conceived of

⁶⁰ Ibid.



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as fluid signs. It is most likely that Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, which was conceived in embryonic form by the forging of alliances and marriages with the Sūmrahs, was given even greater impetus, if not legitimacy, at this time when the Nizārīs rejected their formal solidarity with mainstream Islamic symbols. Moreover, an indication that the *daʿwah* in India was both active and under political stress is evidenced by the fact that when the Ghūrīds attacked Sind first in 1160 C.E. and then again in 1175 C.E., the historian Jūzjānī notes that they “delivered Multān from the hands of the Qarmāṭians,” that is, the Ismāʿīlīs. Hamdani suggests that the fifth or sixth Sūmrah chief, Khafīf or Unar ruled Multān at the time.⁶¹ It is highly probable that the Sūmrahs restored power in Multān with help from the West, that is, from the forces of the Nizārī *daʿwah* in Alamūt or Persia. Further, as the Ghūrīd incursions against the Ismāʿīlīs in Multān began around the time of Ḥasan II ʿala ʿDhikrihi al-Salām, the promise that as the Qāʾim he would bring about justice and truth would have been important to the Ismāʿīlīs in Sind.

Jūzjānī mentions in the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* that Muḥammad Ghorī’s father, the Ghūrīd *sulṭān*, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn, at the end of his life (circa 1160 C.E.) had cordially received emissaries from Alamūt whom he treated “with great reverence; and in every place in Ghūr they sought, secretly, to make proselytes.”⁶² This left a slur on his reign which his successor, Muḥammad Ghiyās al-Dīn immediately redressed by putting to the sword all the “Mulāḥidāh of Alamūt.”

In every place wherein the odour of their impure usages was perceived,
throughout the territory of Ghūr, slaughter of all heretics was
commanded...Ghūr, which was a mine of religion and orthodoxy, was

⁶¹ Ibid., 12.

⁶² Jūzjānī, Minhāj al-Dīn ʿUthmān b. Sirāj, *Ṭabakāt-i-Nāṣirī: A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia*, trans. Henry G. Raverty, vol. I & II (Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint, 1881), 363.



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purified from the infernal impurity of the Karāmiyah depravity by the sword.⁶³

The Ghūrids also “attacked and devastated Quhistān, forcing the submission of Nizāris there.”⁶⁴ Nonetheless, the Ismāʿīlīs must have persisted in Multān, because fifteen years later Muḥammad's brother, Shihāb al-Dīn, again attacked Multān and Ucc and “delivered it from the hands of the Karāmiyah.”⁶⁵ From this we can surmise that at the time of the Ghūrids, the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* was vigorously active in the northwestern regions of Indian subcontinent. The Nizārīs even attempted diplomacy to win the sympathy of the Sunnī Ghūrids. This action produced a backlash, and they were hunted down instead. The Nizārī *daʿwah* was correctly perceived by the Ghūrīd Turks to be a real threat, and indeed, Shihāb al-Dīn was assassinated by a Nizārī in 1206 C.E. The Sūmrah chiefs in Sind, one of whom ruled Multān, were doubtless in close but secret contact with the Nizārī *daʿwah*. As Jūzjānī notes, the emissaries from Alamūt who visited ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn around 1160 C.E were suspected of secretly spreading Ismāʿīlism “in every place in Ghūr.” Presumably, this referred to the lands annexed by the Ghūrids including Sind.

It is important to recall that it was also around this time in 1164 C.E. that Ḥasan II declared the *Qiyāmah* doctrine and that sectarian Ismāʿīlī sources written in Gujerati at the turn of this century claim that Ḥasan II sent the first *pīrs* of the Satpanth *daʿwah* to India between 1162–1166 C.E.⁶⁶ A number of factors point to the likelihood, therefore, that Satpanth Ismāʿīlism was gaining greater momentum and endorsement

⁶³ Ibid., 365.

⁶⁴ Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (1990:404).

⁶⁵ Ibid., 449.

⁶⁶ For instance, see A. J. Chunara, Noorun Mubin (Bombay: Ismailia Association for India, 1951); Syed S. Darghawala, *Tawārīkh-i-Pīr* (Navsari: Published by author, 1914); Jaffer Rahimtoola, *Khojā Komno Itihās* (Bombay: Published by author, 1905).



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during this period. Firstly, Ḥasan's *Qiyāmah* doctrine allowed scope for such innovation; secondly, hostilities from Sunnī rulers in India were only growing more intense and recurrent; thirdly, other strong rivals such as the fast-growing Ṣūfī *ṭarīqahs*, the Mustaʿlī Ismāʿīlīs, and local Hindu chiefs aligned with Sunnī rulers had to be contended with; and fourthly, the Nizārīs already had a complex but safe environment within which to promote a distinctive solution as a result of their long history with or identification as the Sindhi Sūmrahs. The following discussion will elaborate upon these ideas.

Whereas the Nizārīs were allied to or had merged with the Sūmrahs in Sind, the Ṣulayḥid Ṭayyibīs of Yaman maintained a fairly strong hold on the Cambay or Gujarat area. That the Nizārīs and Mustaʿlīs were sworn enemies after the 1094 C.E. schism is confirmed by the fact that Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ had Mustaʿlī's son, the Fāṭimid caliph al-Āmir, assassinated by a *fidāʾī* in 1124 C.E. in Cairo. The Ṣulayḥids maintained that al-Āmir had had a son by the name of Ṭayyib, and hence, their *daʿwah* came to be known as the Ṭayyibī *daʿwah*. Over time, a large segment of the Hindu trading caste called *bohrā* (derived from the Gujarati *vohorvunī* – to trade) became Mustaʿlī Ṭayyibī Ismāʿīlīs. Thus, the Ṭayyibīs of India are also known as the Bohorās.

It may be recalled that during the time of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustanṣir, the Ṣulayḥids had been assigned the responsibility of overseeing the *daʿwah* in India. After the Nizār-Mustaʿlī split, since they were already in control of the Fāṭimid *daʿwah* in the region, their attempts to win particularly the Arab Indian following over to their side would have been relatively easy. However, the fact that the Sūmrahs were loyal to the Nizārīs means that the latter were engaged in *daʿwah* activities in the region soon after the split. It is likely that they also spread their activities into Gujarat where they would have had to face their entrenched rivals, the Ṭayyibī Mustaʿlīs.



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Now, it has been mentioned that there is a record of several *dā'īs* appointed to preach in Sind preserved in the *Sijillāt al-Mustanşiriyā*, which contains letters written by the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustanşir to the Yamanī *da'wah*. According to the Ṭayyibī Bohorā tradition, one of them, a *dā'ī* called 'Abd Allāh, was sent in 1067 C.E. and allegedly converted the Rājput Hindu king of Gujarat, Siddharāja Jaisingha (1094–1143 C.E.) whose capital was Anhilwāḍa Pāṭan. It is interesting to note that in the Satpanth tradition, Pīr Satgur Nūr, allegedly the first *pīr* of Satpanth, is claimed to have converted this same king. It is quite unlikely that either of these two figures converted the king, who remained a faithful Śaivite Hindu till death. However, contemporary Muslim writers praise Jaisingha for his generous treatment of Muslims who were free to worship in their own mosques.⁶⁷ Hollister even suggests that Siddharāja was to some extent influenced by Islam since “he asked for burial instead of cremation,” although he “died as a Hindu.”⁶⁸ At any rate, Siddharāja Jaisingha's reign has been celebrated as the most glorious of Rājput Gujarat, and

In popular imagination, Siddharāj himself was the founder of *all* the important communities in Gujarat—no less than *three* Muslim *pīrs* are reported to have converted him to their own particular sect.⁶⁹

Now, is it possible that many Arab Muslims, including the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlīs, found amnesty among these Hindu kingdoms. What the above traditional accounts underscore is that after the Ghaznawid invasion of 1030 C.E., the Fāṭimid *da'wah* made special efforts to build alliances and gain the loyalty of local Hindu chieftains. After the 1094 C.E. split, both the Nizārīs and Musta'lis continued this policy, but with different emphasis and accommodations. According to Hamdani, the Musta'li

⁶⁷ S. C. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1964), 3.
⁶⁸ Hollister, *The Shia of India* (1953:270).
⁶⁹ Misra, *Muslim Communities* (1964:9).



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Ṭayyibīs, who remained further south near the coastal regions of Cambay “exercised a thorough Arab influence” on its community.⁷⁰ He continues:

We find in their Da‘wa in Gujarat people with Arabic names, and literature written mainly in Arabic. The local Hindu tradition was abandoned and the process of Arabicising had gone very deep. But in the case of the Sūmrās, except for their hereditary Arab names (some of them) we find a considerable Hindu cultural influence.⁷¹

It is thus possible that the more Arab-identified Multānī Ismā‘īlīs in Sind found a more familiar atmosphere among the Ṭayyibīs in the Gujarat region than among the Sūmrās in Lower Sind.

In terms of the Sunnī rulers, what this means is that of the two branches of Ismā‘īlism in India, the Musta‘lī Ṭayyibīs were perhaps more quickly and easily identified with their Fāṭimid predecessors, and hence, were much more vulnerable to Sunnī persecution. Also, it appears that generally, the Ṭayyibīs were apolitical and disinterested in territorial expansion. Instead, they concentrated their *da‘wah* activities in the more hospitable Hindu environment of the Cambay region from which they kept in close touch with their headquarters in Yaman and continued their sea-faring trade. There may be a close parallel, in fact, between the conversion of the Hindu *bohrā* or trading caste to Ṭayyibī Ismā‘īlism and the earlier Buddhist conversions to Arab Islam, since both were linked to an elevation of status through increased trade and Arabization. The distance of the Bohoras from the sultanate in North India and their lack of territorial ambitions may have helped protect them from the North Indian Sunnī dynasties for some two centuries. However, with the Khaljī conquest of Gujarat in 1298 C.E. followed by successive Tughluqid attacks, persecution increased with such intensity

⁷⁰ Hamdani, *Beginnings* (1965:15).

⁷¹ Ibid.



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that by the fifteenth century, “the Ṭayyibīs observed *taḳīyya* very strictly, adhering outwardly to many of the Sunnī formalities.”⁷²

On the other hand, it seems clear that the Nizārī branch of the Fāṭimid *da‘wah* continued to court political goals as evidenced by the presence of the Nizārī *da‘wah* in Multān and Ucch and its connections or identification with the Sūmrahs who were centred in the Thaṭṭa district in Lower Sind. In their attempts to recover Upper Sind, the Nizārīs had to face not only the Ghūrīds, but also the Ṣūfīs whose missionary activities had increased substantially. However, though references are made to Nizārī presence in the regions held by the Ghūrīds, on the whole, it appears that their *da‘wah* worked “behind the scenes.” Undoubtedly, the Nizārīs were behind several sporadic indigenous uprisings that the Ghūrīds faced from local Hindu or converted Hindu tribes. For instance, there is an intriguing reference to a rebellion by the Sankurān tribe near Multān, a year after Shihāb al-Dīn massacred the Ismā‘īlīs in Multān in 1175 C.E. According to Jūzjānī, “most of the Sankurān tribe were manifestly confessors of the Kur’ān creed . . . but, as they had stirred up rebellion, they were put to death.”⁷³ It is also worth noting that when Shihāb al-Dīn attacked Ucch, the other major centre of Nizārī activity, he faced a Rājah of the Bhaṭī Hindu tribe “which previously held a large part of Sind.”⁷⁴

It is reasonable to hypothesize that after the Ghaznawid massacre and the Fāṭimid schism, the Sūmrahs, by now probably identified with the Nizārīs, struck up alliances with other local Hindu chieftains whose kingdoms were also being ravaged by the Sunnī dynasties of the north. As Zahid explains, the Nizārī *da‘wah*

⁷² Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs* (1990:300).

⁷³ Jūzjānī, *Ṭabakāt-i-Nāṣirī* (1881:451)

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, note 3.



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realized the difficulty of recovering the lost following [of Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlīs] in the face of internal dissensions, hostile orthodox Turkish rulers and *ṣūfī* missionaries. Therefore, they decided to win support among the non-Muslims by creating the impression that the Ismāʿīlī beliefs were akin to local Hindu beliefs.⁷⁵

If our reconstruction of the Sūmrah identity is correct, this had already been forged in the crucible of Arab-Hindu Ismāʿīlī interactions of the preceding century. The emergent identity could now be put to further political use. In other words, if successful, the extension of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, by winning the support of more Hindu chieftains, would effectively have crucial *political* ramifications for the Nizārīs. Now, the equally important question is how would such an alliance with the Nizārīs benefit the Hindu local rulers and chieftains? After all, like the Turkish *ghāzīs* or warriors who were devastating their temples and plundering their coffers in the name of Islam, the Nizārīs, too, were Muslim. As Maclean questions, “Without the presence of some additional motivating factor, it is not clear why certain groups of Hindus would abandon their own ideological system for another with a number of similar themes.”⁷⁶ Undoubtedly, the Sūmrah dynasty, which had long intermarried with the Arabs yet retained Hindu customs and manners, must have played an important role as the intermediary with other Hindu tribes. Also, the Sūmrahs would have preserved the memory of the grandeur of the Fāṭimid dynasty in its heyday. At any rate, by the twelfth century, the Nizārīs had themselves established a reputation as a formidable power centred at Alamūt. It would not have been difficult nor baseless, therefore, to reassure or convince local Sindhi and Hindu chiefs and tribes that alliance or solidarity with the Nizārīs or Sūmrahs would be to their advantage. There appears to be sufficient evidence to back the interpretation that “the support given the *daʿwah* by certain sectors

⁷⁵ Zahid, “Ismaʿīlism” (1975:49).

⁷⁶ Maclean, *Religion and Society* (1989:157).



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of the Hindu population can be seen as an attempt to come to terms with the same historical tensions resulting from the refeudalization of Sind.”⁷⁷

Surprisingly, the clues betraying why the local Hindu rulers may have been interested in the Nizārīs was discovered in the *gināns* attributed to Pir Shams, and these will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. But, in brief, there is repeated mention in the *gināns* that help against the “enemy” or “demon” was imminently expected from Daylamān, the West or Iraq; and that this (military) support would arrive led by the Shāh, the Qā’im (messiah *imām*), the long-awaited *avatār* (saviour). There are sufficient clues and allusions to support the hypothesis that the Nizārī call or *da‘wah* (invitation) appealed to the local Hindu chiefs precisely because it offered them hope of a rival force “from the West” that would overcome the oppression of the Turks. That the Nizārīs presented this hope in a religious framework that had already integrated many aspects of Hinduism and had accommodated the cultural sensibilities of the Hindus must surely have made the proposition of alliance more tempting. Besides, once the Hindus had overcome their Sunnī oppressors and freed their lands, they would still be at liberty to retain their older beliefs and customs.

An incident of an uprising in Delhi by the “Qarmaṭī” or “Malāḥidah” in 1206 C.E. shows that the Nizārī *da‘wah* remained in an active political mode in India probably until Alamūt was demolished by the Mongols. The Mongol hordes began their advance towards the Muslim east around 1220 C.E., and, while estimates vary, by 1260 C.E. they had reportedly killed some eight million Muslims from Samarkand to the Indus River. Nizami says, “India was the only country where refugees could find both



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security and livelihood.”⁷⁸ Anticipating the Mongol threat to Alamūt, the incident in Delhi betrays that the Nizārīs may have had designs to seize the seat of Muslim power in India. Before the revolt in Delhi, they had attempted to kill the *sulṭān* Illtutmish (d. 1236 C.E.) in the mosque during Friday prayers, but the king escaped.⁷⁹ Taking advantage of the political instability in Delhi during the first year of the reign of his daughter, Queen Raḡīyya, a troop of “Mulāḥidah heretics of Hindustan” headed by a learned Turk, Nūr al-Dīn, again assembled in Delhi publicly berating the Sunnī *‘ulamā*. Then a horde of them attacked the Muslims in the Jāmi‘ Masjid during Friday prayers.⁸⁰ Although the revolt was repressed, what is interesting is that the so-called heretics, or Nizārīs, had collected at Delhi

from different parts of the territory of Hind, such as Gujarāt, and the country of Sind, and the parts round about the capital, Dīlhī, and the banks of the rivers Jūn and Gang.⁸¹

This diversity among the rebels suggests a fairly extensive region of covert activity as well as an advanced degree of organization in order to mobilize forces from various parts of Sind. Also, it is important to note that the troop largely consisted of an indigenous Nizārī following. Hamdani says that the principal Ismā‘īlī force in Sind was that of the Sūmrahs, and that “Sindhi Ismā‘īlīs had formed the main bulk of the people who revolted at Delhi under Nūr Turk.”⁸² According to him, the Sūmrahs must have summoned the help of the Gujarati Ismā‘īlīs. It is possible to speculate that had it

⁷⁸ Khaliq A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961), v.

⁷⁹ Hollister, *The Shia of India* (1953:349); also Jūzjānī, *Ṭabakāt-i-Nāṣirī* (1881:624) note 2.

⁸⁰ Jūzjānī, *Ṭabakāt-i-Nāṣirī* (1881:646); Hollister, *The Shia of India* (1953:350).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 646.

⁸² Hamdani, *Beginnings* (1965:13).



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not been for the destruction of Alamūt, the Nizārīs may have continued their attempts to seize power in India.

The Collapse of Alamūt and its Implications for Satpanth

However, events in the eastern Islamic lands dictated otherwise. The consequences of Ḥasan II's declaration of the *Qiyāmah* in 1164 C.E. were to be severe. This stark break from the Sunnī world backfired and *Qiyāmah* Nizārism was ostracized as being utterly unIslamic, a consequence clearly understood by Ḥasan's grandson, Jalāl al-Dīn. Thus, while the *Qiyāmah* had succeeded in buttressing Ḥasan II's position as *imām*, by the time Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III came to office, the violent reaction from the Sunnī world that Ḥasan II had supposedly declared irrelevant had become intolerably relevant. It had helped only to confirm an already deeply-entrenched suspicion of the “esotericists” and reinvigorated Sunnī persecution.

Soon after he assumed office in 1210 C.E., Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III publicly repudiated the doctrine of *Qiyāmah*, declared his solidarity with Sunnī Islam, and ordered his followers to practice *sharī'ah* strictly in line with the Sunnī way.⁸³ He established contacts with the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Nāṣir and various Sunnī rulers informing them of his reform. He also had mosques built in every Nizārī town to underscore uniformity with Sunnī worship, and invited Sunnī theologians and jurists to preach to his Nizārī followers. These measures succeeded in convincing the caliph at Baghdad of Ḥasan's newly acquired orthodoxy, and the latter issued a decree in 1211 C.E. confirming his conversion to Sunnī Islam. Consequently, Ḥasan was accorded the status of *amīr*, and

⁸³ Ibid., 405.



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his territorial rights were recognized by the ‘Abbāsīd caliph “who showed him all manner of favours.”⁸⁴

The Nizārīs seem to have accepted this behaviour without question, interpreting it as a form of total **taqiyya or religious dissimulation**. Daftary observes that, “Ḥasan’s new policies had obvious political advantages for the Nizārī community and state, which had survived only precariously.”⁸⁵ The key, in my view, lies not in the first half of the statement, but in the second. For indeed, had the Nizārīs merely sought political advantage, the adoption of Sunnism would have taken place much earlier. Rather, by this stage, the very existence of the Nizārī community seems to have been at stake, so much so, that further attacks on them might have proven fatal.

Thus, Jalāl al-Dīn’s reorientation bought time and brought the Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs respite and temporary relief from the incessant attacks of their enemies. The Ghūrīd attacks against Ismā‘īlīs in Qūhistān stopped, and Ismā‘īlīs in Syria actually received assistance from the Sunnī Ayyūbids to fight the Franks. Ḥasan played an active role in military alliances with the ‘Abbāsīd caliph against the Khwārazmians. Since his father had gained the confidence of Sunnī rulers and the caliph in Baghdad, it appears that ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad III, Ḥasan III’s son, relaxed somewhat the strict identification with Sunnism. However, the pro-Sunnī orientation declared by Ḥasan III was never formally renounced by Alamūt.

By the time ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad III came to power in 1221 C.E., the lands of Islam were experiencing the shockwaves of the Mongol invasion. The Mongols had already destroyed the Khwārazmian empire, crossed the Oxus valley and seized Balkh.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 406.



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Many Sunnīs sought refuge in the Nizārī fortresses of Qūhistān and Rudbār. Muḥammad made several diplomatic attempts towards peace with the Mongols, but they were rebuffed and scorned. Also, despite the Nizārīs' show of Sunni affiliation, many Sunni *‘ulamā’* (scholars, theologians) distrusted their sincerity. Some of these scholars occupied influential positions in the Mongol retinue, and incited the Mongols against the Nizārīs. In 1252 C.E., the first task entrusted to Hülagü Khān by the Great Khān Möngke, instigated by the Sunni Muslims at his court, was to destroy the Nizārī state; and only then was he to proceed to capture the rest of the Islamic lands, and force the submission of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate in the capital, Baghdad.⁸⁶ When Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh succeeded his father in 1255 C.E., he gave strict orders to his followers to abide by the *sharī‘ah*. Like his father, Rukn al-Dīn made several attempts to submit to the Mongols peacefully, and several letters were exchanged. Ironically, at this point when the Nizārīs were least revolutionary and most secure, Hülagü's invasion in 1256 C.E. was to strike them their final blow.

The Nizārī Ismā‘īlī state had a poignant end. Alamūt and its lords fell as a result neither of heroic battles lost nor of a lack of skills and wherewithal. Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh's diplomatic maneuvers to forestall the reputedly savage devastation of the Mongols worked against him. In exchange for the peaceful release of his subjects, he agreed to have his generals submit their fortresses and to surrender. Hülagü insisted that Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh surrender himself, but the *imām* tried to buy time at Alamūt, and Hülagü, growing impatient, made plans for attack. Encouraged by his scholar-guest, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, the Imām Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh surrendered. Hülagü promised amnesty if Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh would co-operate by ordering his men to yield their citadels. Ironically, virtually all Nizārī fortresses were expeditiously dismantled by

⁸⁶ Marshall Hodgson, "The Ismā‘īlī State," *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, ed. J. A. Boyle (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1968), 480.



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Hülagü on Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh's orders, after which Rukn al-Dīn was killed and his family and followers roundly slaughtered. Juwaynī's boast that Hülagü Khān had succeeded in wiping out the Ismā'īlīs came very close to the truth. As Hodgson explains,

Meanwhile, the Sunnī Muslims persuaded the Mongols to destroy the whole Ismā'īlī people so far as they could. . . . The men of Kūhistān were summoned to great gatherings—presumably on the pretext of consultation—and slaughtered. The slave markets of Khurāsān were glutted with Ismā'īlī women and children, denied the privileges of Muslims.⁸⁷

This fatal event left surviving Nizārīs—and there could not have been many—in a state of complete shock and confusion. Though weakened to the extreme, the Nizārīs still attempted over the next two decades to restore their strongholds in Rūdbār and Qūhistān, but failed. Finally, in 1270 C.E., their prized and impregnable fortress at Girdkūh in Daylamān capitulated. Along with their fellow Persians, those Nizārīs who were able to slip away probably fled to neighbouring India to escape the cruelty of the Mongol hordes who systematically exterminated civilian populations in Persian towns along their march from Alamūt to Baghdad. As curtly stated by Petrushevsky, "This mass-killing was a complete system . . . and had as its goal the planned destruction of those elements of the population that were capable of resistance."⁸⁸

Surely at the end of this wholesale massacre and destruction, the priority of the Nizārīs must have shifted to sheer survival. If in the mid-twelfth century, Satpanth was envisaged by the *da'wah* at Alamūt as an expeditious political strategy, at the fall of Alamūt a century later, it would have represented a haven of escape and an

⁸⁷ Ibid., 482.

⁸⁸ I. P. Petrushevsky, "The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran under the Il-Khāns," *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, ed. J. A. Boyle (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1968) 484.



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indispensible refuge. The Mongol catastrophe had devastated the Nizārīs and brought to a complete halt their active social and political program for an independent Ismāʿīlī state.

However, without their tangible power networks and fortresses in the West, if recognised, the Nizārī-affiliated Sūmrahs would also have been vulnerable to the extreme in India. Undoubtedly, the Nizārīs who swelled the ranks of the Ismāʿīlīs in Sind had to make a crucial decision at this painful historical juncture. By 1270 C.E. to have been identified either with their Fāṭimid or with their Alamūt forebears would have been suicidal given the incessant Sunnī reprisals against the *mulāḥidah* (which, no doubt, received renewed vigour with the Īl-Khān's embrace of Sunnī Islam). To survive, the Ismāʿīlīs clearly had to take cover under the guise of a Sunnī or some other non-Fāṭimid and non-Nizārī identity. The *daʿwah* in India had already succeeded in planting the seeds of an indigenous identity and establishing an ethnic base. In the course of the Nizārī *daʿwah*'s long association of some three centuries with the Sūmrahs, and other local Hindu tribes, the essential contours of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism must have gradually taken shape. It is plausible that the roots of the *ginān* tradition may reach back to the time of Ismāʿīlī-Hindu alliances around 1005 C.E., when the invasions of Amīr Sebūktigin, followed by his son Maḥmud Ghaznawī, brought them together. However, not until the declaration of the *Qiyāmah* in 1164 C.E. is it likely that Satpanth gained its religious and political legitimacy. The final demise of Alamūt, and the consequent need both for camouflage and a sanctuary, would submerge these initial political underpinnings of the Satpanth tradition; for thereafter, the safer route for the survival and propagation of Ismāʿīlism was political pacifism and religious anonymity in the guise of a Hindu or Hindu-Muslim syncretic sect.

In giving up their political ambitions, the *daʿwah* in India would safeguard the survival of the Indian Ismāʿīlī community. After the devastation of Alamūt, the only real choice



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for Ismāʿīlī endurance in Sind in the face of Sunnī oppression was to vanish, which the Ismāʿīlīs did under the ostensibly Hindu or Hindu-Muslim syncretic identity of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. Having become marginal to the extreme, had the Ismāʿīlīs in Sind clung to their much maligned Nizārī past, they would certainly have risked extinction. To survive, they legitimized the nascent Satpanth community that had been built upon political alliances and intermarriage, and by thus aligning themselves with Hindu elements, they were able to enlist native resources and sympathy. This was achieved through a sustained and creative application of the age-old Ismāʿīlī technique of *taqīyah* (religious dissimulation) which involved, in this instance, a combined process of indigenization, adhesion and syncretism. We may call this strategy the chameleon technique, that is, using camouflage for the sake of self-preservation and regeneration.

In addition to *taqīyah*, however, another principle that may have enabled the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs to follow such a remarkable course of action was their interpretation of the Ismāʿīlī dialectic of the *ẓāhir* and the *bāṭin*, the exoteric and the esoteric. This tension has worked in opposing directions depending upon the historical circumstances of this sect. When it was important to emphasize uniformity, as was the case in the Fāṭimid period, the antinomian pull of the esoteric or *bāṭin* was restrained. On the other hand, when religious forms became restrictive or potentially dangerous, the outer or *ẓāhir* was subordinated to its inner meaning or *bāṭin*, as in the case of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs in the subcontinent for whom it was crucial to relinquish previous forms in order to hide identity. At the doctrinal level, as long as new forms and symbols delivered the essence or *bāṭin* (called *sār* in the *gīnāns*) to the seeker, the replacement of old forms was justified. By thus appealing to this dialectic between *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, the Ismāʿīlīs periodically attached and detached the symbolic forms of religious life from their inner, spiritual realities as they saw fit. It is not surprising that such an inherently



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unpredictable principle provoked intense suspicion and antipathy from the *shari'ah* - minded Muslims.

In summary then, contrary to the opinion that Satpanth Ismā'ilism developed mainly to promote religious conversion, I would like to suggest that the key impetus for its evolution into this Indic form was rooted in historical circumstances that ultimately forced post-Alamūt Ismā'ilīs in Sind to find inconspicuous ways by which to survive. The Nizārī Ismā'ilīs had suffered successive setbacks leading up to their final defeat in 1256 C.E. Now, not only did the Ismā'ilīs in Sind (indigenous or refugees who fled from the Mongol debacle) have to disappear from public view, they also had to find unobtrusive methods of survival. It is probably for this reason that, despite their affinity to Ṣūfī *ṭarīqahs* such as the Chishū order, they did not pursue or adopt a similar form so as to remain a safe distance away from mainstream Sunnī Islam, which would surely have continued to massacre the Ismā'ilīs had their presence been suspected. Instead, the solution of the Satpanth tradition that externally appeared to be Hindu, but was internally recognizable as Ismā'ilī, created a safe harbour; it also fashioned the social and cultural bridge that would facilitate Hindu crossings to Satpanth, thereby allowing for the continued growth of this sect. What made possible the transition and transformation from Nizārī to Satpanth Ismā'ilism was the practice of *taqīyah* and the Ismā'ilī concept of the relationship between form and spirit, *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*.

Before closing this section, a few observations are necessary. Scanning Ismā'ilī history, one notices over the course of its development a significant number of shifts in policy, method and doctrine. The only constant in all this change is the principle that change be in deliberate response to context and circumstance. As one author states, "The Ismā'ilīs were noted for making changes in their policies according to



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circumstances.”⁸⁹ Circumstance, however, was weighed or assessed in terms of the goals of the *imām* or the heads of the *da‘wah*. Thus, al-Mu‘izz and Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ shared in common the belief that Ismā‘īlīs had to assert a central role in the Islamic *ummah*, and accordingly, took care that in exoteric matters of the *sharī‘ah*, they were to be in consonance with mainstream Islamic practice. On the other hand, Ḥasan II ‘ala Dhikrihi al-Salām rejected this framework and introduced his own assessment of the meaning of justice in history. Although the declaration of the *Qiyāmah* and the suspension of the *sharī‘ah* tacitly conceded that the goal of Ismā‘īlī sovereignty was no longer realistic, in terms of the future of the sect, they offered it a new lease on life by redefining its goals and its successes in spiritual and ultimate terms.

Also, the rupture with the Islamic *sharī‘ah* asserted in practical terms the Ismā‘īlī philosophical distinction between the *ẓāhir*, or the visible form of faith, and the *bāṭin*, or its internal reality. This distinction facilitated the separation of one from the other without fear of the loss of the *bāṭin* or the essentials of the faith. Hence, the practice of *taqīyah* was defensible in religious terms, and it has been consistently invoked in Ismā‘īlī history during periods of persecution or socio-political aggression. The virtual identification of the Nizārīs with the Sunnīs towards the end of Alamūt period starkly betrayed the degree to which the sect had become marginal, for in spite of its being a state, its only way of surviving was through total religious dissimulation. As we have seen in our discussion of developments in Sind after the 1094 C.E. split, the Nizārī Ismā‘īlī cover in the subcontinent was not to be Ṣūfism or Sunnism, but Satpanth.

Finally, it is important to draw attention to the vital link that existed between the Ismā‘īlī technique of masking religious identity and of striking up political alliances. It is clear

⁸⁹ Zahid, “Isma‘ilism” (1975:47).



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that the self-presentation of the Ismāʿīlīs was invariably linked to those forces in the environment which the *daʿwah* felt would advance its cause. For instance, the Fāṭimid *daʿwah* in Sind maintained an Arabo-centred personality, and its first mission was to gain the alliance of the pro-Shīʿah Muslim Arab rulers of the region. We have noted that during the time of al-Muʿizz, with Arab rule firmly in place, conversion of the indigenous population was regarded to be first a process of islamization, and then of ismāʿīlization. It would appear that conformity with general Islamic patterns was desirable and encouraged.

Only later, when this Arab base was devastated, did the *daʿwah* reorient itself to local Hindu or Arab-Hindu chieftains, and accordingly, indigenous religious and cultural elements were accommodated. Thus, we find that some form of dissimulation and compromise was already at work among the Hindu-Arab Sindhis who became the Sūmrahs. The Sūmrahs in Lower Sind do not appear to make a show of their Fāṭimid, and later Nizārī, connections, and retained many Hindu customs. Further south, traditions about ʿAbd Allāh and Satgur Nūr converting the Gujarati king Siddharāja emphasize this refocusing of interest on establishing a more indigenous power base. A similar pattern is evident in the Persian *daʿwah* where an identification was made with pro-Shīʿī Persian elements which were already anti-Turkish, anti-Saljūqid, and anti-ʿAbbāsīd-Sunnī. A systematic study of the precise configuration of these religious, political and ethnic alliances cannot be undertaken here but would help explain considerably the shifts in policies and doctrine that we observe through the course Ismāʿīlī history. Clearly, then, the form that Ismāʿīlism developed in the Indian subcontinent was intimately connected with historical and political circumstances, although this form eventually evolved into the complex social and religious framework of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. In this chapter, we have attempted to demonstrate why, “the frequently vented causal argument which holds that Hindus converted to Ismāʿīlism in



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Sind as a simple consequence of congenial similarities in ideological themes would appear to miss the mark.”⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Maclean, **Religion and Society** (1989:157).



CHAPTER FIVE

PĪR SHAMS: PROBLEMS OF HISTORICAL IDENTITY

The subject of this chapter is the Ismāʿīlī preacher, Pīr Shams Sabzawārī, who belongs to the foundational period of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism and to whom the collection of *gināns* translated in this dissertation has been attributed. He is at once one of the most celebrated and yet one of the most enigmatic figures of the tradition. A charismatic personage representing the prototype of a holy man possessed of sacred lore and miraculous powers, he has a substantial layer of folklore and oral tradition around him, depicting him variously as a powerful yogi, miracle worker, and Muslim faqīr.

The Gujarati edition of the Anthology translated here provides a hagiographic account of Pīr Shams titled, “A Short Life-history of our Twenty-third Pīr, Hazrat Pīr Shamsuddīn Sabzawārī.” In brief, the hagiography describes his place of origin (Sabzawār), the Imām who commissioned Pīr Shams to preach (Imām Qāsim Shāh), the scope of his travels (from Badakhshān through the Hindukush, the Pāmīr mountain ranges, Kashmir on to India), and his various adventures and miracles of conversion along the way (bringing down the sun to cook some raw meat, defeating the famous Shūfī master, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zakariyya, etc.).¹ True to motifs that are typical to the genre of Indian legends and hagiography, the account boasts of Pīr Shams Sabzawārī's

¹ For a translation of the full account, see Appendix A.



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spiritual powers that are made manifest by the heroic defeat of his foes, his superiority over other famous holy men, his far-flung travels that circle a vast region, and his healing powers that win him great fame. It is worth noting that many details in the hagiography, which will be discussed later, coincide with references found in the *gināns* of the Anthology attributed to Pir Shams including, for instance, the names of towns, regions, persons, dates, and allusions to political tension.

The vivid hagiographic materials surrounding this Ismā'īlī *pīr* is made all the more complex and interesting since,

what is now told about the saint is a mixture of memories of at least
three different eminent persons who possessed one and the same name,
— Shamsu'd dīn Muhammad.²

There has been, in other words, considerable confusion with respect to the identity of Pir Shams, for the heterogenous material associated with him has “acquired for him many identities.”³ The legends, myths and folkloric motifs that have collected around the name of Shams suggest a conflation of the identities of three separate individuals who lived between the mid-twelfth and early fourteenth centuries: the mystic-poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's famous mentor, Shams-i Tabrīz; the Ismā'īlī Imām, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, son of the last *imām* of Alamūt, Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh; and the Ismā'īlī preacher, Pir Shams the alleged composer of many *gināns* of Satpanth literature. Since these key figures were proximate to each other in time and region, Ivanow suspects that

a “Sind to Qonya” legend was produced which . . . incorporated various
folklore motifs and religious relics of many nations residing between
those extreme [geographic] points.⁴

2 Wladimir Ivanow, “Some Muhammadan Shrines in Western India,” *Ismaili: Golden Jubilee Number* (reprint) January 21 (1936), 5.

3 Hasina Jamani, “*Brahm Prakāsh*: A Translation and Analysis” (McGill University: unpublished M.A. thesis, 1985), 22.

4 Ivanow, “Satpanth” (1948:12).



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Ivanow notes that legends of Shams were not only abundant in northwestern India, where the latter's shrine is located in Multān, but that they were also widely circulated and extremely popular among the Šūfī *darwishes* of Iran and in the northern areas of Afghanistan and Tibet.

Such a body of material would be of vast interest both to students of folklore and hagiography. However, what is relevant here is the light it may shed on the question of the identity of the Pīr Shams who is claimed to have composed *gināns*. Fortunately, Ivanow and Nanji have carefully sifted through some of this material and weighed it in relation to other historical evidence and come to the conclusion that three distinct figures by the same name of Shams al-Dīn existed, and that the Pīr Shams of the Satpanth tradition was neither the mystic Shams-i Tabrīz nor the *imām* Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad.

Both scholars also conclude that little by way of historical fact can be known about the actual life and work of Pīr Shams. Dismissing outright the value of traditional oral or sectarian materials, Ivanow says "there is nothing by way of history of real events around which the legends have developed."⁵ With a similar attitude of incredulity towards the dates mentioned in connection with Pīr Shams in the Satpanth *ginān* literature, he says "it would hardly be necessary to argue that all of them are based on pure fantasy."⁶ Even Nanji, who does not "summarily dismiss the accounts of the *gināns* as a source of history,"⁷ is also finally led to conclude after reviewing his evidence that "the historical personalities of the early pīrs remain dim and obscure."⁸ Thus, there is little agreement or certainty on such fundamental questions as the

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 13.
7 Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978:50).
8 Ibid., 69.



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approximate dates and areas of activity of Pīr Shams. In the words of Jamani, who offers the most recent review of the problem, “Despite all of the clarification offered . . . the personality who is credited with having set the Nizārī Ismā‘īlī *da‘wa* in motion . . . remains an enigma.”⁹

While it may not be possible to recover a true image of the historical personality of the *ginān* composer Pīr Shams, nor to fix with any precision his specific travels and activities, I still think it is worth carefully investigating what Nanji has styled the “historicizing tradition”¹⁰ that developed around this *pīr* in the *gināns* for what this tradition might reveal about the beginnings of the Satpanth *da‘wah*. As is well known in studies of folklore and oral literature, it is not uncommon for sacred tradition to fuse accounts of origins stretching over several generations under a key figure who becomes a culture hero.¹¹ Thus, the stories in the *gināns* associated with Pīr Shams, who was a primary architect of Satpanth, may register some important clues regarding its beginnings. In fact, an examination of the testimony preserved in the *gināns* translated in this dissertation has revealed some interesting insights about this pivotal phase of the Satpanth *da‘wah* in the Indo-Pak sub-continent. At the very least, the patterns, allusions and evidence recorded in these sources seem to suggest that the main activities of Pīr Shams most likely took place during the last century of the Nizārī state prior to the fall of its headquarters in Alamūt. The internal evidence also appears to support the theory advanced in the last chapter regarding the political underpinnings of Satpanth Ismā‘īlism.

⁹ Jamani, “*Brahm Prakāśh*” (1985:26).

¹⁰ Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā‘īlī Tradition* (1978:50).

¹¹ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 24.



The Problem of Multiple Identities

This chapter will, therefore, first present the controversy regarding the multiple identities of the Ismāʿīlī poet-preacher, Pīr Shams, and review the various claims about his dates and areas of activity. This will be followed by an analysis of the internal evidence on Pīr Shams in the *gināns* attributed to him. In particular, the narratives in the *gināns* will be assessed for clues regarding the situation and strategy of the early *daʿwah*. Although this picture will reflect the subjective and normative historical consciousness of Satpanth concerning its origins, nonetheless, it may also display a dim memory of the complexity of forces with which the *daʿwah* had to contend. Placed within the context of an historical understanding of the region, and the larger Ismāʿīlī world, these accounts may generate some interesting questions and, perhaps, insights into the foundational phase of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism.

It has been noted that the identity of Pīr Shams evolved into a figure that came to encompass three distinct historical personalities. The confusion of Pīr Shams with Shams-i Tabrīz stems from oral traditions associated with a mausoleum in Ucch, a short distance from Multān.¹² A region long associated with Ṣūfism, it is not surprising that tales of the famous *ṣūfī* mystic who so enamoured Rūmī became entwined with the exploits of this Ismāʿīlī *pīr* whose activities were also centred in Multān. For generations, this shrine in Ucch has been venerated as that of the famous Ṣūfī master, Shams-i Tabrīz.

Local informants state that the mausoleum was erected by Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, the grandson of Pīr Shams (that is, Shams-i Tabrīz) in 1330 C.E.¹³ A plaque on the mausoleum

¹² Ivanow notes they are about 80 miles apart. Ivanow, "Some Muhammadan" (1936:6).

¹³ Ivanow, "Some Muhammadan" (1936:3).



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bears an inscription recording the demise of Pir Shams as the year 1356 C.E.,¹⁴ which date is quoted in a sectarian Satpanth source, *Noorun Mubin* (1926) by Ali Cunara.¹⁵ Ivanow, however, gravely doubts the plaque's authenticity since "the ancient shrine has been on many occasions rebuilt, repaired . . . so that nothing, or very little of the original building is left."¹⁶ Nanji, too, distrusts the value of any dates or inscriptions found on the tomb, arguing that any original markings were probably lost as the shrine underwent successive periods of repair and neglect.¹⁷ Although an official government plaque on the tomb presently states that it belongs to the Ismā'īlī saint, Pīr Shams, the sway of oral tradition is amply illustrated by the fact that local inhabitants and pilgrims insist that the shrine, itself called "Shāh Shams," contains the remains of the Šūfī saint, Shams-i Tabrīz.¹⁸

Shams-i Tabrīz

A cloud of mystery surrounds the life of Shams-i Tabrīz, the enigmatic spiritual mentor and beloved of the famous mystic, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207–1273 C.E.). In Nicholson's words, this figure "flits across the stage [of history] and disappears tragically enough."¹⁹ All we know about Shams-i Tabrīz (d. circa 1247 C.E.), whose hagiography depicts him as an antinomian Šūfī who defied all conventions, is that he

14 Zawahir Noorally, "Hazrat Pir Shamsuddin Sabzawari Multani, Great Ismaili Heroes (Karachi: Ismailia Association for Pakistan, 1973), 84.

15 Ali J. Chunara, *Noorun Mubin*, rev. ed. (Bombay: Ismailia Association for India, 1951), 326.

16 Ivanow, "Some Muhammadan" (1936:3); also see Wladimir Ivanow, "Shams Tabriz of Multan," *Professor Shafi Presentation Volume*, ed. S. M. Abulullah (Lahore: Majlis-e-Armughan-e-Ilmi, 1955), 110.

17 Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition* (1978:66).

18 Personal communication from Vernon Schubel who was recently (1988) in Multān doing fieldwork on Muslim shrines and saints.

19 R. A. Nicholson, *Selected Poems from the Dīvān-i-Shams-i-Tabrīz*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898), xviii.



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arrived in Qonya around 1244 C.E. where he met Rūmī.²⁰ Rūmī was deeply impressed with the *pīr* and became his disciple. This incited the jealousy of Rūmī's own admirers who took to rebuking Shams. After three years, Shams-i Tabrīz suddenly disappeared and by some accounts, he is reported to have been tragically murdered by the son of one of his own disciples.²¹ Although there is some doubt as to the precise date that he was killed, it is certain that Shams-i Tabrīz died long before Rūmī (d. 1273). Both their tombs are in Qonya on a site that has served for centuries as a Ṣūfī centre of the Turkish Mevlevi (from Rūmī's title, "mawlānā") order of *darwishes*.

Ivanow notes that according to popular folklore in Sind, Shams-i Tabrīz did not die in Qonya, but escaped with Rūmī to Multān "walking on foot over the sea."²² He was not, however, left in peace even in India, so he yanked off the skin of his entire body by pulling up on his ponytail and flung these at his persecutors. He then proceeded to Multān where he acquired some raw fish or meat, and asked the local inhabitants to cook it for him. They refused, whereupon Shams-i Tabrīz ordered the sun to cook his meat. The sun obliged him and began to descend, scalding the earth with its heat. The terrified Multānis begged Shams to send it back. He did, but the sun has remained closer to Multān than to any other place on earth. This is why "Multan is the hottest place in the world." Local inhabitants point to a Hindu temple called Keshavpurī as the site where this miracle was performed.²³

20 Marshall G. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 245.

21 Ahmad Akhtar, "Shams Tabrīzī — Was he Ismāīlī?" *Islamic Culture X* (1930) 131.

22 Ivanow, "Some Muhammadan" (1936:5).

23 *Ibid.*, 6.



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A similar tale is preserved in the *gināns* attributed to the Pir Shams of Satpanth. It is in this realm of the imaginary and the miraculous, then, that Shams-i Tabrīz becomes firmly identified with the Ismāʿīlī composer of *gināns* whose activities centred around Multān. As Multān was the seat of an ancient solar cult, Hindu and Zoroastrian, the existence of such a tale was not unusual. In fact, an ample stock of popular stories about moving or otherwise controlling the sun exist in the region.²⁴ Moreover, since the name Shams means “sun,” this further facilitated puns, word play and the idea that Shams was an incarnation of the solar deity. At any rate, the question remains, was the Ismāʿīlī Pir who was buried at Ucch the same person as Shams-i Tabrīz? Were these two men separate figures who had some connection? And if Pir Shams were Shams-i Tabrīz, how would the existence of two tombs—the one in Multān and the other in Qonya—be explained? Ivanow ultimately says, “All my attempts to solve this strange problem have so far failed.”²⁵

Imām Shams al- Dīn Muhammad

A twist is added to this puzzle with another claim that Shams-i Tabrīz was, in fact, none other than the son of the last Ismāʿīlī *imām* of Alamūt.²⁶ Nūr Allah Shūstarī in his *Majālis al-Muʾminīn* (written circa 1610 C.E. in India) traces the ancestry of Shams-i Tabrīz to Ismāʿīlī roots.²⁷ An interesting refutation of this claim has been advanced by Ahmad Akhtar in an article, “Shams Tabrīzī: Was he Ismailian?”²⁸ According to Akhtar, the claim that Tabrīzī was an Ismāʿīlī *imām* is made by appeal to a genealogy which “proves” that Shams-i Tabrīz was the son of ʿAlāuddīn or

24 Ivanow, “Satpanth” (1948:13).

25 Ivanow, “Some Muhammadan” (1936:6).

26 Hodgson, *Venture of Islam* (1974:245).

27 Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978:63).

28 Akhtar, “Shams Tabrīzī” (1930).



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Jalāluddīn, both names of Alamūt *imāms*. He traces the source of this information to Daulatshāh who wrote *Taḥkīratu'sh Shu'arā*, and upon whom even the careful scholar R. A. Nicholson relied for details concerning Tabrizi's life. However, Akhtar attempts to discredit Daulatshāh as a reliable source, and points out that even E. G. Browne observed of the latter's work, "This is an entertaining but inaccurate work, containing a good selection of historical errors."²⁹ After consulting the older, and in his estimate, more reliable accounts of Aflākī and Jā'mī, Akhtar concludes that the real name of Tabrizi's father was Muḥammad bin 'Alī bin Malikdād or Malik Dā'ūd and not 'Alāuddīn or Jalāluddīn. Thus, he says, "The alleged claim of Shamsuddīn being an Ismailian is absolutely unfounded."³⁰

There is, however, another reason why it is unlikely that Shams-i Tabriz and the Ismā'īlī Imām are one and the same person. Scholars generally concur that a son of Imām Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh, the last ruler of Alamūt, was secretly escorted out of his father's castle Maimun Diz around 1256 C.E. when the Imām realised that there was no way of averting the impending attack of the Mongols.³¹ Although in his *Tarīkh-i Jahāngusha*, which extols the victories of his patron Hülagü Khān, Juvaini (1226–1283 C.E.) claimed that Hülagü had succeeded in bringing an end to the Shī'ī line of *imāms*, Hodgson has pointed out that Juvaini's boast was not to be trusted, since he was a special enemy of the Ismā'īlīs.³² There is some uncertainty regarding the Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad's date of birth. Whereas Ivanow thinks he was born in 1252 C.E., which means that he was only four years old when he was smuggled out of the

²⁹ Quoted by Akhtar: *Ibid.*, 135.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 136.

³¹ Mumtaz Sadikali, "Imam Shamsud-din Muhammad," *Ilm* vol.6 no. 4 (1981) 30.

³² Hodgson, *Order of the Assassins* (1955:270); for the Juvaini reference, see tr. by J. A. Boyle, *Tarikh-i Jhangusha* by Ata Malik Juvaini, a Persian text of Mirza Mohammed Qazvini, vol. II (Manchester: 1958), 724-5.



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Nizāri fortress, Maimun Dīz, other sources variously claim that the Imām was seven (b. 1248 C.E.) or twenty-one years old (b. 1235 C.E.) when he escaped.³³ According to Ivanow, Imām Shams al-Dīn died around 1310–1311.³⁴ Now, if Shams-i Tabrīz died around 1247 C.E., and if Imām Shams al-Dīn was born between 1235–1252 C.E., it is impossible that the two could have been the same person. Even if the earliest estimated birth of 1235 C.E. is accepted, had Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad been the mystic Shams-i Tabrīz, the latter would have met Rīmī when he was barely nine years old!

According to Sadikali, evidence in Persian documents confirms that Shams al-Dīn escaped Maimun Dīz with his uncle Shāhinshāh and went to Ādharbayjān.³⁵ Ritter notes that the child was carefully hidden and, “He and his successors either remained in complete seclusion or they appeared in disguise as Sufī Shaikhs.”³⁶ To remain incognito, it seems that the Imām lived in various towns in Ādharbayjān including Ardabil, Ahar, Tabrīz and Angoda. Living as a Ṣūfī, he adopted the profession of silk and embroidery, and hence, also came to be known as Shams Zardozi or Shams, the embroiderer. In his *Khiṭābāt-i ‘Āliya*, Pīr Shihāb al-Dīn Shāh (d. 1884) explains that the confusion between Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad and Shams-i Tabrīz developed because the Imām had briefly lived in Tabrīz, where his handsome countenance had earned him the epithet, “Sun (*shams*) of Tabrīz”.³⁷

33 Sadikali, “Imam Shamsud-din” (1981:36).

34 Wladimir Ivanow, “A Forgotten Branch of Ismailis,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1938) 69.

35 Sadikali, “Imam Shamsud-din” (1981:29). Unfortunately, he does not make explicit which manuscripts mention this.

36 Ibid., 30.

37 Ibid., 32; also Nanji, *The Nizāri Ismā‘īlī Tradition* (1978:64). Cf. *Khiṭābāt-i ‘Āliya* (Supreme Admonitions), ed. Hushang Ojaqi (Tehran: 1963), 42.



The Imām Shāhīs' Shams

In addition to the identification of Pīr Shams with Shams-i Tabrīz, and the identification of Shams-i Tabrīz with Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, there is yet a third identification of Pīr Shams and Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad. In the sectarian sources of the Imām Shāhīs, a branch of Satpanth that split off in the sixteenth century,³⁸ the *ginān* Satveṇjī Vel composed by Nar Muḥammad Shāh identifies Pīr Shams not only as Shams-i Tabrīz, but also as Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, son of Imām Rukn al-Dīn Khūr Shāh.³⁹ Characteristically, Ivanow describes the sectarian work as “a kind of legendary history of the imāms and the pīrs, in rather florid and bombastic style, chiefly dealing with miracles.”⁴⁰ The Vel goes on to describe Imām Shams as having relinquished his throne to his son Qāsim Shāh in 1310 C.E. in order to come to India to spread the *da‘wah*, which he did disguised as a *pīr*.⁴¹

Ivanow doubts the veracity of this claim, arguing that if Imām Shams really did abdicate his position as *imām* and take on the mantle of *pīr*, he would have been at least sixty years of age by the time he began to preach in India. Instead, he theorizes that the Satveṇjī account among the Imām Shāhīs had been concocted to legitimize Nar Muḥammad Shāh's claim to the imāmate. Since only the sons in the bloodline of an *imām* may receive the investiture of the imāmate, Ivanow speculates that it would have served Nar Muḥammad Shāh's self-interest to endorse or even fabricate a genealogy that traced his father, Pīr Imām Shāh, to the Ismā‘īlī Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad.

38 For a discussion of this split, see Wladimir Ivanow, “The Sect of the Imam Shah in Gujerat,” *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* XII (1936) 19-70.

39 Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā‘īlī Tradition* (1978:63).

40 Ivanow, “The Sect of the Imam Shah” (1936:24).

41 *Ibid.*, 29.



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The fortuitous coincidence of the name of Pīr Shams with that of Imām Shams facilitated such a forged theory of descent.⁴²

What conclusions can be drawn from this discussion of the triple Shams al-Dīns? Was Pīr Shams Sabzawārī of the *gināns* the Ismāʿīlī Imām or the Ṣūfī Shaykh? And who was the real person buried in the tomb in Multān? It seems plausible that the identification of Pīr Shams Sabzawārī with Imām Shams al-Dīn was contrived to boost Nār Muḥammad Shāh's claims to the imāmate. There also seems to be sufficient evidence that the child, Imām Shams al-Dīn, narrowly escaped from Alamūt, and although he lived in secrecy, it seems highly unlikely that he relinquished his office as *imām* to take on the duties of a *pīr*. As for the confusion between the Imām Shams al-Dīn and Rūmī's mentor, Shams-i Tabrīz, the former would have been only seven or twelve years old when Tabrīzī died. It is unlikely, then, that Imām Shams was Shams-i Tabrīz.

The question remains, however, whether Pīr Shams Sabzawārī was none other than Shams-i Tabrīz. Except for the interlude of his three-year association with Rūmī, not much is known about this Ṣūfī saint. The hagiographic image of both Pīr Shams and Shams-i Tabrīz fits that of an itinerant, antinomian, and wonder-working *qalandar* (wild, ecstatic *ṣūfī*) type figure. Ivanow mentions an interesting reference in Jāʿmī's *Nafahāt al-Uns* (completed in 1476) to an alleged meeting between the famous saint of Multān, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zakariyya (d. 1277) and Shams-i Tabrīz. Could this have been, in fact, a reference to Pīr Shams? The *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams describe a contest between him and Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zakariyya. Nanji does not make much of this matter, however, interpreting it as follows:

⁴² Ibid., 31-33; also see Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978:63-64).
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The confrontation with Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zakariyyā is a commonly diffused motif used in this case to illustrate the contrast between a wandering "qaiandar" type ṣūfī and the established type of ṭarīqa ṣūfism of Bahāʾ al-Dīn. In the Ismāʿīlī context the confrontation was also meant to exemplify the superiority of the daʿwa and the dāʿīs over other similar forces and figures standard in the milieu.⁴³

While both points are valid, by considering the meaning of this reference purely at a symbolic level, we may miss the real possibility that either Pīr Shams himself, or the early *daʿwah*, confronted a serious threat in the activities of the *ṭarīqah* founded by Bahāʾ al-Dīn in Multān. It may be recalled that Sind, and particularly the area of Multān, had long been a vital zone of *daʿwah* activity. The establishment in Multān of a Suhrawardī order headed by Bahāʾ al-Dīn would thus have represented a major threat to the early *daʿwah*, especially as this Ṣūfī *ṭarīqah* had close connections with the Delhi sultanate.

At any rate, the reference by Jāʿmī to an alleged meeting between Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zakariyya and Shams-i Tabrīz does not help establish whether or not the Ismāʿīlī *pīr*, Shams Sabzawārī was, in fact, Shams-i Tabrīz. Nor can we be sure whether the two had already been confused by the time Jāʿmī wrote his work. The only remaining clue is the tomb in Qonya which, if it is truly that of Shams-i Tabrīz, would rule out the identification between him and Pīr Shams. Ivanow's own investigations led him finally to conclude that the person buried at the shrine in Ucch must have been the Ismāʿīlī *pīr*, "Sayyid Shamsu'd-dīn Sabzawari . . . an eminent Ismaili missionary who converted a large number of Hindus,"⁴⁴ in other words, the figure referred to as Pīr Shams, composer of the *gināns* of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism.

⁴³ Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978:66).

⁴⁴ Ivanow, "Some Muhammadan" (1936:6).



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Assuming, then, that the tomb in Uch belongs to Pīr Shams Sabzawārī, let us now turn to the question of dates, provenance and origin. The caretakers of the tomb or *mutawallī* who claim to be descendants of Pīr Shams, preserve a manuscript containing the *shajara* (a genealogical tree) as well as myths and legends of various *pīrs*.⁴⁵ Ivanow observes that the *shajara* “is chiefly devoted to the genealogy of the Sayyids who own the shrines, and regard the early saints as their own ancestors.”⁴⁶ Vansina has pointed out that genealogies “are of direct relevance to the social structures of today,”⁴⁷ and Ivanow alludes to this role of the *shajara* in preserving the claims of the shrine-keepers. Thus, at first he is inclined to discount the information in the *shajara* as “utterly unreliable,”⁴⁸ but later he modifies his view.

Although the genealogy contained in this *shajara* was “perverted and corrupt,” not only was it the earliest that Ivanow had found for Pīr Shams, but the dates given in it were the same as those given for the him in *Khātima Mirʿāt-i Aḥmadī*, a famous history of Gujarat composed by ʿAlī Muḥammad Khān between 1748–1761 C.E., and the only known non-Nizārī source containing the genealogy of the Satpanth Ismāʿilī *pīrs*.⁴⁹ Thus, Ivanow reasons that the dates given in the shrine’s *shajara* were probably the most reliable dates we have on Pīr Shams.⁵⁰ This list traces the *pīr*’s lineage to the Shīʿī Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and indicates that his family hailed from Sabzawār. It also states that Pīr Shams was born in the town of Ghaznī in 1165 C.E., that he came to the province of Multān in 1202 C.E. (at the age of 37), and that he died there in 1277 C.E.

45 Ivanow, “The Sect of the Imam Shah” (1936:28).

46 Ibid.

47 Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (1985:24).

48 Ivanow, “The Sect of the Imam Shah” (1936:28).

49 For the genealogies of the Nizārī Ismāʿilī *pīrs* in the *Mirʿāt-i Aḥmadī*, see Misra, *Muslim Communities* (1964:54-55).

50 Ivanow, “The Sect of the Imam Shah” (1936:31).



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(at the ripe old age of 112 years).⁵¹ As Ivanow notes, the *shajara* thus extends the life of Pīr Shams from *before* the Ghūrīd invasions to two decades *after* the fall of Alamūt which attributes to him an unusually long life.⁵² If the *shajara* is to be trusted, Pīr Shams would have thus lived and preached during the century before the fall of Alamūt (1256 C.E.), and a little after (if indeed he had died in 1277 C.E.).

In addition to the *shajara* in possession of the shrine-keepers and the genealogy found in *Khātima Mirʿāt-i Aḥmadī*, other genealogies of the *pīrs* of Satpanth have been preserved by the Khojah Ismāʿīlīs and the Imām Shāhīs. Although Misra feels that “the value of these genealogies for historical research is not very great,”⁵³ if carefully handled, they could reveal important information such as names of the *pīrs*, their relative importance, their probable sequence of activity, and continuities or lapses in the *daʿwah*.

Several lists of genealogies exist amongst the Ismāʿīlīs, some of which have been reproduced by Misra.⁵⁴ In the older *duʿā* or daily prayer of the Satpanth Khojahs, it was customary to recite a list of the Ismāʿīlī *imāms* beginning with Ḥazrat ʿAlī, followed by another list of Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs* and *pīrs*. According to Nanji, such lists of *pīrs* and *imāms* also existed among non-Khojah Ismāʿīlīs. One such list was discovered by the Russian scholar A. Semenov, who traced it to a seventeenth-century Iranian Ismāʿīlī.⁵⁵ Nanji himself offers a list of *pīrs* (including variants) preserved among the Ismāʿīlīs in his Appendix.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Ibid., 31-32.

⁵² Ivanow, “Satpanth” (1948:14–15).

⁵³ Misra, *Muslim Communities* (1964:54).

⁵⁴ Ibid., 55.

⁵⁵ Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978:157), note 88.

⁵⁶ This list is based on the following sources: two of the oldest copied lists available in Khojki manuscripts dated S. 1813/1756 C.E. and S. 1793/1736 C.E.; a list found in the old *duʿā* in a mss. dated S. 1893/1836 C.E.; and for



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Although today the popular conception among the Satpanth Ismā'īlīs is that Pīr Shams was the second *dā'ī* to be sent from Iran to preach in India after Pīr Satgur Nūr, Pīr Shams is actually listed as the fifteenth *pīr* after Satgur Nūr in the genealogy of Ismā'īlī *pīrs*. This leads Nanji to speculate that perhaps Shams belonged to a much later period of the Satpanth *da'wah* or that Satgur Nūr's name was deliberately advanced in the genealogy to make him appear as a "foundational" figure of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* in India.⁵⁷ Another explanation, following Nanji's cue that the list did not necessarily imply lineal descent but "spiritual" descent, is that the names listed between Satgur Nūr and Pīr Shams may refer to other contemporary *dā'īs* who operated in northwestern India during the Alamūt period. In any case, the genealogies preserved by the Khojah Ismā'īlīs, like the *shajara* at the shrine, indicate that the predecessor of Pīr Shams was Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, who is also said to be the father of Pīr Shams. For instance, the *ginān Satvarṇi Vaḍi* (v. 127) mentions Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn as the name of the father of Pīr Shams. It also indicates that both men descended "from a line engaged in propagating the *da'wa* on behalf of the Imāms of Alamūt."⁵⁸

Pīr Shams al-Dīn b. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Sabzawāri

What tentative conclusions can be drawn from the above discussion of the origin and date of Pīr Shams? There is no reason to doubt that a person named Pīr Shams was indeed an historical entity. Were we to accept Ivanow's view that the *shajara* preserved at the tomb of Pīr Shams is the most trustworthy of the evidence in this category, at the very least we may surmise that Pīr Shams was born in Ghaznī in the middle of the

purposes of comparison, the genealogy of Imām Shāh given in *Mir'āt-i Aḥmadi* as well as the list of *pīrs* preserved among the Nizārī Ismā'īlī of Iran given in Ivanow's *Ismailitica*. Cf. Appendix A in Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition*, (1978:139-142).

⁵⁷ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁸ Ibid.; also see 164, note 132.



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twelfth century, that his family hails from Sabzawār, that he travelled eastward to Multān from where he conducted his activities, and that he was buried in a town nearby called Ucch in the second half of the thirteenth century. That is, the man buried in the tomb at Ucch in Multān is Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawāri, an Ismāʿīlī poet-preacher who played an instrumental role in the formation of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. The genealogies provided by Nanji, Misra and Khakee all list his immediate predecessor's name as Ṣalāh al-Dīn, who was possibly his father.⁵⁹

It is this figure, Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawāri, whose legacy and works have been preserved in the *ginān* tradition. The conflation of his identity may signal a personage whose activity and influence had been so vast and seminal that, as is the case with culture heroes and founding figures in general, his hagiographic image was exaggerated to assume superhuman proportions. This is confirmed by the fact that this very Shams “was also regarded as a great Sufic saint, and it is in this capacity that he is now looked up to by many Muhammadans of all schools.”⁶⁰ Beyond this, what we know about Pīr Shams is legendary. Let us turn, therefore, to examine the internal evidence in the *ginān* literature.

Gināns: Internal Evidence on the Problem of Identity

It has been noted that the operation of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* in the Indo-Pak subcontinent produced the unique indigenous form of Ismāʿīlism called Satpanth and its religious literature called *gināns*, a word derived from *jñāna*, the Sanskrit term for

⁵⁹ Ibid., 140.; Khakee, “The *Dasa Avatāra*” (1972:9); Misra, *Muslim Communities* (1964:54). N.B. The manuscripts used by Nanji were dated 1756 C.E. and 1736 C.E. These are the same dates as the ones cited in the manuscripts used by Khakee. It is not clear, however, whether they were, in fact, the same manuscripts.

⁶⁰ Ivanow, “Some Muhammadan” (1936:5).



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sacred knowledge or wisdom. The significance of this literature in the formation, history and life of this sect cannot be overstated. For well over seven centuries, the *ginān* tradition has exercised the status of sacred scripture in the religious life of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, and *ginān* recitation continues to be an integral and vital part of its daily ritual and devotional practices today. The composition of this body of vernacular poetry has been traditionally ascribed to the Satpanth *pīrs*, preacher-poets sent from Iran to spread Satpanth in the region.

As sacred scripture, the *ginān* tradition has for generations been the focus of intense veneration among the **Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs**. As Asani says, “For those who revere them, the *gināns* are the embodiment of truth, the keys to eternal happiness.”⁶¹ This is typically the sentiment that most religious and oral societies express towards their specific sacred literatures. The perennial problem for the scholar is how to balance the claims of sacred tradition with the demands of historical investigation. That Ivanow felt this dilemma and that he recognised the intensity of attachment the Khojahs felt towards their tradition is manifest in his “profound apologies to those for whom the legends may be dear.”⁶² Since we must turn our attention to the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams for what they might reveal to us that is relevant to an understanding of his role and activity, or failing this, to an understanding of the situation of the early *daʿwah*, a few remarks concerning the nature of the evidence represented by Satpanth literature are appropriate.

Ivanow's genuine concern that his scholarship may distress or otherwise perturb his Ismāʿīlī friends is easily explained by his attitude towards their religious literature. It

61 Ali S. Asani, “The *Ginān* Literature of the Ismailis of Indo-Pakistan: Its Origins, Characteristics, and Themes,” *Devotion Divine*, ed. D. Eck & F. Mallison, Gröningen Oriental Series, vol. VIII (Gröningen & Paris: Egbert Forsten and École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1991), 2.

62 Ivanow, “Satpanth” (1948:4).



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has already been remarked that Ivanow did not have much regard for the popular religious imagination or for folk traditions. He says,

It is an indisputable fact that religious tradition generally is very little concerned with historical reliability, seeking in the past only for instructive examples, or vindicating certain religious or moral principles. This particularly applies to Saptanth with its Hinduistic basis. The Indian mind is notoriously unhistoric. . . All this . . . belong[s] to the sphere of belief, or religious legend, not history.⁶³

Ivanow is certainly correct in maintaining that sacred tradition is not the same thing as documented history. The purposes, goals and methods of each are distinct. Where their paths cross, however, is on the question of truth claims about what really happened in the past: when, how and why. It is not possible here to enter into the subject of the relationship and distinction between history and tradition, but it is necessary to question Ivanow's sweeping claim that, "There is, of course, almost nothing in the way of history of real events around which the legend [of Pīr Shams] has developed."⁶⁴ Though a half truth, by declaring these materials useless, his statement only succeeds in discounting completely the potential value of tradition (oral or written) for an understanding of the past.

Materials in oral tradition, folklore, myth and sacred stories are neither "true" nor "false" in any absolute historical sense. Various disciplines such as cultural anthropology, folklore, religious studies and psychoanalysis have evolved complex approaches to these materials to cull from them the meaning that they have had for their own societies as well as in terms of literature as such.⁶⁵ The challenge for the historian

⁶³ Ibid., 3–4.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 12.

⁶⁵ Among others, see Claude Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Jack Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976); Cornelius Loew, *Myth, Sacred History, and Philosophy* (New York:



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is how to sift through these kinds of sources to glean what may be of historical value. In his study of **Oral Tradition as History**, Jan Vansina has demonstrated that such materials are usually grounded in reminiscences, hearsay, or eyewitness accounts of contemporary events which, depending upon the criterion of truth that exists within a given society, will be communicated over time more or less faithfully.⁶⁶ Whether the content is considered to be factual or fictional, whether the narrative form is epic or poetry, whether the society has checks and balances to reward and punish precise memorization, and whether a written record of oral performances exists alongside the tradition, all these considerations affect and determine the degree and accuracy with which these sources preserve a memory of the past.

In the case of *ginān* literature, much more research will be necessary before any of these questions is resolved. Many areas remain obscure and perplexing. Little, for instance, is known about the actual process of *ginān* composition and transmission. Although the traditional explanation is that the *pīrs* from Iran composed the *gināns*, did these early Persian-speaking *pīrs* personally compose this Indian vernacular poetry which “requires expert knowledge of several Indian languages?”⁶⁷ Or did they have local disciples who received their teachings and then creatively fashioned them into a poetic form? Are there linguistic, literary and narrative clues within the *gināns* to help determine such things?

Another area that requires careful investigation is the problem of *ginān* manuscripts. Nanji has suggested that *gināns* may have begun as an oral tradition but that by the

Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967); Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); and Alan Dundes, *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977).

⁶⁶ Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (1985:13).

⁶⁷ Ivanow, “Satpanth” (1948:2).



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sixteenth century, there was already a written manuscript tradition existing alongside the oral tradition.⁶⁸ As Asani has noted, until extant *ginān* manuscripts have been collected, reconditioned, catalogued and made publicly accessible, it will be impossible to grasp the process by which *gināns*, if they began as oral traditions, came to be recorded, and further, to know how much of the original compositions has been preserved faithfully over centuries of transmission.⁶⁹ Asani believes that several centuries of transmission have “riddled extant *ginān* texts with corruptions and distortions.”⁷⁰ The exact nature of these variations, whether they are typical errors encountered in the process of copying manuscripts or whether they represent more serious and willful editorial changes, and the frequency of one or the other within the *ginān* corpus as a whole, cannot be known until many more specimens of this tradition have been studied.

These questions obtain no less for the works that have been translated in this dissertation. The individual hymns in the printed Gujarati volume of *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams were collected from various manuscripts which were then destroyed early this century.⁷¹ Unfortunately, there are no *ginān* manuscripts for any *pīr* dated earlier than the mid-eighteenth century; moreover, all extant *ginān* manuscripts are in very poor condition. It remains questionable how valuable tracing the history of transmission in manuscript form of individual *gināns* will be. Schimmel, for example, concedes that it may never be possible to reconstruct the original texts from extant manuscripts. Nevertheless, she thinks that the writings of the Ismā‘īlī *pīrs* may actually

68 Nanji, *The Nizāri Ismā‘īlī Tradition* (1978:9–14).

69 Ali. S. Asani, *The Harvard Collection of Ismaili Literature in Indic Languages: A Descriptive Catalog and Finding Aid* (Riverside: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992), 7.

70 Asani, *The Harvard Collection* (1992:7).

71 Nanji, *The Nizāri Ismā‘īlī Tradition* (1978:10).



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constitute the oldest extant literary expression of Sind. Although it is next to impossible to reconstruct the original texts of their religious, mystically tinged poetical sermons and prayers, parts of the later Ismā'īlī literature in Kacchi, Gujerati, and a few pieces of Sindhi are of such archaic a character that we may accept some of them as genuinely ancient witnesses of the language of the Lower Indus Valley.⁷²

Not all questions of antiquity, authorship and transmission can be resolved by manuscript study alone. Linguistic, formal and substantive criteria also need to be developed to differentiate among different layers in the *ginān* tradition. It is quite possible that many *gināns* attributed to one *pīr* were actually composed at a later date and posthumously ascribed to him. In some cases, internal evidence makes this clear,⁷³ but in other cases, a number of issues such as different recensions and variants, the nature of the language, historical allusions, thematic content and so forth must be assessed in tandem to determine the question of origin, authorship and authenticity.

In sum, it is important to qualify that the following analysis of the poems attributed to Pīr Shams will require the additional support of in-depth, specific studies dealing with the linguistic, manuscript and thematic nature of the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams. At this stage, however, having made a preliminary review of the relevant manuscripts,⁷⁴

⁷² Annemarie Schimmel, *Sindhi Literature* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz: 1974), 4.

⁷³ For instance, both *gināns* Brahma Prakāśa and Garbīs traditionally ascribed to Pīr Shams contain references to historical persons who lived much later than his period.

⁷⁴ This review was undertaken in the summer of 1985 at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, England. At that time, Zawahir Moir was still in the process of preparing a complete catalogue of the Khojki manuscripts at the IIS. (She assures me that it was completed a couple of years later, but that her only copy was mysteriously "lost" by the administration). At that time, the Institute had a collection of about 130 Khojki manuscripts, the bulk of which had been received from the Ismailia Association of Pakistan badly refurbished. Without a catalogue, and given the fairly damaged and disorderly state of the manuscripts, it was evident that before any useful attempt could be made to trace individual *gināns*, first the collection had to be treated for physical preservation, and then properly catalogued and classified. Nonetheless, I searched the entire collection for the *gināns* of Pīr Shams in the Gujarati edition. Although I succeeded in locating several, it should be noted that most of the manuscripts consulted belonged to the last century. Of the whole collection, only fifteen manuscripts



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and being convinced that the analysis of the Gujarati printed version would nonetheless prove useful to the task at hand, I propose to make a beginning in the analysis of some *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams Sabzawārī, and to make a case that the *gināns* preserved to date are likely to be more conservative than fluid in form. As Nanji has argued, while one must carefully consider the possibility of revision, interpolations, and updating in the transmission of *gināns*, one must do so “without exaggerating the degree to which this was done” since “adherents would be loath to alter or pervert what was in their eyes a ‘sacrosanct’ tradition coming from their pīrs.”⁷⁵

Let us consider this argument and a few others that lend support to the assertion that the tendency toward the careful preservation of Satpanth literature is likely to be greater than the inclination to admit changes. Vansina has pointed out that it is particularly important to evaluate a group’s attitude towards its oral or sacred tradition to ascertain how carefully it will transmit it. For instance, according to the criterion of facticity, “Factual traditions or accounts are transmitted differently—with more regard to faithful reproduction of content—than are fictional narratives such as tales, proverbs and sayings.” Vansina goes on to add, “The criterion hinges on the notion of truth, which varies from one culture to another and which must be studied.”⁷⁶

Now, it has been noted that Satpanth tradition strictly maintains that the *gināns* were composed by Nizārī Ismā‘īlī pīrs who were *authorized* to do so by the imām. The understanding of the office of pīr is that it embodies a special status and charisma that is not available to the ordinary Ismā‘īlī. Only that class of individuals who were given

were dated between 1750–1850 C.E. The IIS has reportedly microfilmed its collection of Khojki manuscripts which are now kept in storage. Without a catalogue, however, it is difficult to envision how these microfilms, if they are accessible for research, can be profitably used.

75 Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā‘īlī Tradition* (1978:17).

76 Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (1985:13–14).



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the authority of this office could compose *gināns*. This is a deeply ingrained belief among the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs and forms the basis of their claim that *gināns* are none other than sacred scripture or *śāstra*. The claim that the *pīrs* composed the *gināns* is to be understood literally. It is thought that the very words and tunes of the poems were the miraculous work of the *pīrs* sent from Iran. Furthermore, oral teachings communicated through sermons in the *jamāʿat khānah* claim that the *gināns* composed by the Ismāʿīlī *pīrs* are analogous to the inspired and sacred utterances of the Vedic *ṛsis* or seers. In other words, *pīrs* were not ordinary poets but divine seers and holy men with spiritual powers. Accordingly, like the Vedas (the *gināns* of Pīr Shams, for instance, frequently refer to themselves as Veda), the words of the *gināns* are deemed sacred, having the magical potency to heal, protect, convert and enlighten.⁷⁷ Given this interpretation of their religious literature, it is clear why the Satpanth Khojahs “would be loath to alter or pervert” their *gināns*, “a sacrosanct tradition coming from their *pīrs*.”⁷⁸

Despite all good intentions to reproduce as faithfully as possible this sacred literature which is believed to have been composed by a special class of spiritual guides (the *pīrs* or *gurus* as they are also called in the *gināns*), other formal elements are required to show that its messages and teachings may have remained relatively free from careless mistakes or alterations in transmission. In the case of the *gināns*, this evidence is to be found in their literary form combining poetry and melody, both of which greatly enhance the chances of faithful reproduction. To be reproduced exactly, poetry must be memorized, and it is likely to remain unchanged from recitation to recitation. Although variations will inevitably occur over time, changes in exact wording will depend on the

⁷⁷ These interpretations, which I have personally heard, are regularly offered in sermons made in the *jamāʿat khānah*.

⁷⁸ Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978:17).



frequency of recitation, which generally helps to increase fidelity, and on the controls for maintaining faithful performance in the form of reward and punishment. Thus, in a context such as the *jamāʿat khānah*, where faithful recitation is obligatory, reciters can be reprimanded for mispronunciation or interpolations.⁷⁹ The structure of poetic form assists in memorization, but the addition of melody greatly enhances recall. Vansina notes, “One of the poets actually explained that the melody serves as a means to remember words,” a sentiment that I have heard expressed by *ginān* singers.⁸⁰ Thus, songs increase a group’s ability faithfully to transmit messages over time since poetry and melody both function as mnemonic devices.

Based on the attitude of the Satpanth Khojahs towards their tradition, as well as the actual formal elements of that tradition, an argument can be made, then, that the tendency towards preserving the *gināns* intact would likely outweigh the tendency towards tampering with them. Two more arguments for preservation of form can be found within the *gināns* themselves: secret teachings and special messengers. As will become clear in the analysis of the material, a recurrent theme in the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams is that the teachings of Satpanth were to be practiced privately or in secret, and that these teachings would be conveyed in the form of *gināns* recited by his two messengers or disciples, Candrabhāṇ and Surbhāṇ. It has been suggested that esoteric, confidential messages entrusted to specific individuals for transmission are likely to be more carefully safeguarded.⁸¹ Also, teachings that are transmitted in the context of initiation or secret ceremonies are treated as special and sacrosanct. Oral transmission is particularly effective when the need for secrecy is acute; to safeguard and control the

79 This has happened to me personally. The likelihood of mistakes going unobserved is much higher in Canada, where a large segment of the Ismāʿīlī *jamāʿat* is unfamiliar with the tradition. However, elderly members will frequently come up to reciters to point out mistakes made during recitation.

80 Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (1985:46).

81 *Ibid.*, 95.



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accuracy of transmitted materials and the messages that they contain, select members are usually chosen to perform this task. Based on the accounts in the *gināns*, there is clear evidence that this is what may have happened at the beginning of Satpanth.

This concern for privacy and preservation is revealed by the invention of a special script to record the *gināns* and keep them “secret and available only within the circle of adherents.”⁸² According to Satpanth tradition, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, the next major *pīr* after Pīr Shams, invented the Khojkī script which is based on proto-Nāgarī letters. This script may have served a number of functions including preserving the *pīrs*’ teachings; providing an exclusive but common means of communication among converts living in the contiguous regions of Sind, Punjab and Gujarat, and acting as a source of cohesion for a linguistically diverse religious group.⁸³ What is particularly significant in this context is that

Khojkī may have served the same purpose as the secret languages, such as the so-called *balabailān* language, utilized by Muslim mystics to hide their more esoteric thoughts from the common people.⁸⁴

Not only was the tradition thus preserved in writing, but in a secretive script emphasizing a concern for faithful transmission.

Let us turn now to the material in the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams that might shed some light on the question of his life and times. As previously noted, scholars such as Ivanow have rejected as totally invalid any testimony preserved in the *gināns*. Such an extreme stance may not be necessary. Certainly, given the nature of this tradition, caution must be exercised in treating narratives in the *gināns* as straightforward historical accounts. On the other hand, Nanji has made an important observation that is

⁸² Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā‘īlī Tradition* (1978:9).
⁸³ Asani, “The Khojkī Script” (1987:443).
⁸⁴ Ibid.



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amply confirmed by the *gināns* translated in this dissertation, namely, that the *ginān* tradition demonstrates a definite proclivity to “historicize” about the past.⁸⁵ That is, there is clearly an “historical intension” in the *ginān* accounts, where the past is used as an argument, a proof of legitimacy, or to teach a lesson relevant to the present.⁸⁶ The preponderance of actual place names, of identifiable historical persons and, in some instances, of the mention of specific dates in the *gināns* suggests a perceptible concern with history or what Vansina has called “facticity” within the tradition. Ivanow was himself struck by this, but dismissed it as indicated in his statement, “Such suspicious precision and remarkable ‘historicity’ in the context is nothing but a poetical device which inspires no confidence.”⁸⁷

What is of special interest to us, then, are those narratives in the *gināns* of Pīr Shams that attempt to communicate a concrete sense of the past, and thus cite specific dates, places, names and events. At the outset, it is worth noting the difference in tone between the narratives in the *gināns* that describe the activities of Pīr Shams, and that of the short hagiographic “Life-history” mentioned earlier that is provided in the Gujarati edition of the Anthology translated here. It should be noted that the *gināns* in the Anthology are far less hyperbolic in tone and imagery, a fact that may have important implications. It seems possible that existing alongside the bare contours of the life of Pīr Shams mentioned in the *gināns* were more detailed accounts of his life known to his associates and disciples. After his death, these details may have been transmitted orally to the next generation, and over time, were no doubt elaborated according to the religious and cultural expectations of the milieu until eventually they constituted a hagiography. Given the more restrained and conservative tenor of the

85 Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978:50).

86 Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (1985:92).

87 Ivanow, “Satpanth” (1948:14), note 2.



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gināns, it does not seem as if many of these hagiographic elements were re-incorporated into them. Thus, *gināns* with highly embroidered accounts may, therefore, indicate that they belong to a much later period of composition.

Dates

In our earlier discussion in this chapter on the dates of Pīr Shams, it was noted that according to the genealogy preserved at his tomb, Pīr Shams was born in Ghazna in 1165 C.E. and buried in Ucch in 1277 C.E. Now there are several dates mentioned in the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams that advance his life by at least half a century. The earliest date appears in the fifth verse of *Surbhāṇḍji Vel*, which states that Pīr Shams visited his disciple Surbhāṇ in S. 1175, that is, 1118 C.E.⁸⁸ The next date occurs in the *ginān* sequence called *Joḍilo* translated in this dissertation. Verse 25 of *Ginān* number 77 (henceforth, the *ginān* number and verse will be cited as follows: 77:25) states:

In the year Samvaṭ 1178 on the last day of the month of Kārūk,
The Guru established himself; the day was Tuesday.

77:25

Noorally interprets this verse to mean that the Pīr established his centre of preaching on this date.⁸⁹ The verse occurs in the context of a story about the Pīr's conversion of a Hindu town, and the date given marks the time when the king and his subjects were initiated into Satpanth. The next two dates are cited in *Candrabhāṇḍji Vel*; it notes

⁸⁸ Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition* (1978:165) note 134. In Zawahir Noorally, "Hazrat Pīr Shamsuddin Sabzawari Multani, Great Ismaili Heroes (Karachi: Ismailia Association for Pakistan, 1973), 84, dates given as S. 1174/1119 C.E.

⁸⁹ Noorally, "Shamsuddin Sabzawari" (1973:84).



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that Pīr Shams came to Cīnab in S. 1200/1143 C.E., and that Candrabhāṇ converted to Satpanth in S. 1207/1150 C.E.⁹⁰

Now what is to be made of these dates, one of which includes the day and month as well? Why was it so important to record the date of these stated conversions and of meetings with the disciples? If these dates are to be trusted, why would the *shajara* dates at the shrine place Pīr Shams a whole century later? It is rather difficult to answer these questions. There is no obvious reason to explain why these dates would have been fabricated. Could the dates be markers of events associated with *dā'īs* who preceded Pīr Shams? Either Pīr Shams did, in fact, preach in India during the first half of the twelfth century or he did not, in which case, we can only speculate that perhaps he had a predecessor whose activities have been attributed to him. The connection of these dates with his two disciples only serves to complicate the matter further.

If the dates are accurate, it would mean that the main activity of Pīr Shams in Sind immediately preceded the Ghūrid invasions of the Ismā'īlī areas in Multān which began in 1160 C.E., and which ended with Muḥammad Ghori's capture and slaughter of the Ismā'īlīs in Multān's capital, Ucch, in 1175 C.E. But whether Pīr Shams was born in Ghazna in 1165 C.E. and came to India in 1202 C.E., or whether he was already in India by 1118 C.E., both the *shajara* and the *ginān* dates indicate that his activities in Sind preceded the fall of Alamūt, that is, he was active at a time when the Nizārī Ismā'īlī *da'wah* was still a vigorous political operation. What memory, if any, of this context has been preserved in the *ginān* attributed to him? Is there any evidence indicating directly or implicitly that Pīr Shams was engaged in political activity?

⁹⁰ Ibid.; also Jamani, "Brahm Prakāśh" (1985:24) and Nanji, The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition (1978:165) note 134.



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Place names

Let us examine, therefore, a few *gināns* in the Anthology translated here that refer to places in the general area associated with Ismāʿīlī presence in Sind, namely, Multān, Cīnab, Ghazni and Ucch.⁹¹ This discussion and analysis will limit itself only to those details that may be of relevance to the discussion of the life and work of Pīr Shams or of his time. Also, given the body of material and wealth of allusions, symbolism and episodic motifs that exist in the Anthology, this discussion will remain rather cursory, focusing only on the accounts centred in and around Multān. This, however, will be sufficient to demonstrate that a great deal of rich material of possible historical value has been embedded in the *gināns*.

Twelve *gināns* in the Anthology make reference to Multān and a town called Cīnab, which most likely refers to Multān itself⁹² (since Multān is “the city on the Cīnab river.”)⁹³ What is most striking about this group of *gināns* is their battle and fort imagery, and the secret alliance that exists between a Queen Surjādevī and Pīr Shams through his two disciples. According to these *ginān* narratives, Pīr Shams came from the region of Alamūt (Daylamān) to Multān where he settled. From Multān, the Pīr proceeded to Ghazni taking along with him two youths, Candrabhāṇ and Surbhāṇ.⁹⁴ These two disciples accompanied Pīr Shams wherever he went and they feature regularly in his various adventures. In fact, upon closer inspection of the various

91 Three other towns called Godī Viloḍ, Bhoṇnagar and Analvād form the context of different and lengthy narratives, but with the exception of Analvād, which may, in fact, refer to Anhilwād Pāṇan of Siddharāj Jaisingh's fame, the geographic location of the other two places has not been found.

92 Ginān 10 makes an implicit identification between Multān and Cīnab.

93 They are : 8; 10; 39; 47; 55; 65; and 2; 10; 14; 22; 25; 28.

94 14:3-4; 14:9; 14:11.



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stories, they function typically as mediating or messenger figures between the Pīr and his opponents or allies.

The constant presence of these two diminutive figures, which from a literary standpoint, act as a foil to heighten the stature of the Pīr, signals their importance in the narratives. Candrabhāṇ and Surbhāṇ were the Pīr's two arms, so to speak, in as much as he instructed them to communicate messages to his devotees or teach new recruits the practices of Satpanth. But lest their significance be missed, several *gināns* simply declare the "fact" that they were his true disciples (*dāsa*) and devotees (*bhakta*). For instance,

Two brothers Candrabhāṇ and Surbhāṇ were the disciples of Pīr Shams
From a common ancestor, they were devotees (*bhakta*) of *kalyug*. 2:1

The authorization of their status is significant particularly since it is clear that they actually function in several narratives as the Pīr's surrogates. An interesting *ginān* which relates a dialogue between Pīr Shams (in the form of a parrot) and one of his female devotees (a queen called Surjādevī) confirms this special connection between the Pīr and his two disciples. She asks him to tell her about the appearance and approach of the "two travellers" whom he is sending to her. Pīr Shams replies:

"O Queen, both of them live with me;
They will come reciting the *gināns* of the Guru;
As for their caste, they are servants/devotees (*dāsa*)."

15:2

Surjādevī then says she will bring together her circle of eight to this meeting and beseeches him to teach all. The Pīr then speaks of a place (of happiness) before there was earth or sky:

Queen Surjā asked, "What is the key to that place, O Swāmī?
Reveal to us some sign, some name by which to realise it."

15:7

This theme of secret signs and keys is pervasive throughout, and creates the impression that a special code existed which the characters used to communicate messages. It is



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possible, for instance, that the various unknown characters named in the *gināns*, as well as the repeated reference to mythical characters, represented some kind of secret code language. In any case, the Pīr assures her that his disciples will come and show her the path. It is worth stressing that Pīr Shams seems to be in secret communication with the queen, and reveals to her the signs by which she will recognise his messengers, who, in turn, will give her the “keys” to release or freedom. Further, the queen appears to have collected together a small group of followers who await further instruction from the Pīr.

Another *ginān* narrates just such a promised meeting between the Pīr’s disciple and the Queen. Surbhāṇ has been sent to Surjādevī who lives in the home of a demon-king. His mission is thus fraught with danger, for he has entered the “demon’s land” or enemy territory to meet his master’s devotee (*dāsī*) [10:1]. The queen emerges from her private quarters when Surbhāṇ announces he has been sent by the Guru. She urges,

“Standing on my feet, I, the Queen plead!
O Swāmī, have mercy upon us!
Carry us safely across to the other shore. 10:6

“If you [promise to] recollect Shāh Pīr,” [replied Surbhāṇ]
We will assure you and give you our word of honour. 10:7

He teaches her that to attain “the other shore” (that is, security, peace, salvation, happiness), she must take the oath of loyalty and repeat “Shāh Pīr,” an epithet of the *imām*. As the messenger is about to depart, Surjādevī’s group appears and entreats him quickly to return to “Deliver us to the other shore!” Tension and intrigue surface in this poem. In addition to religious salvation, the metaphor of crossing over safely to the other shore may imply release from a temporal state of fear and insecurity.⁹⁵ We learn that the queen is married to a “demon” in the city of Cīnab [10:16], and that she is a

⁹⁵ For a discussion of this metaphor, cf. Katherine K. Young, “Tirtha and the Metaphor of Crossing Over,” *Studies in Religion*, vol 9, no. 1 (1980) 61–68.



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secret follower (and possibly, an informant) of Pīr Shams. The appeal that the queen and her small gathering make for assurances to be delivered across to the other shore may be both literal and symbolic. That is, this may be a plea for imminent rescue as well as eternal salvation. At any rate, the disciple takes a pledge from the queen, and promises that

“You will attain the supreme boon of Heaven!
You will enter that glorious City of Immortality (*amrāpūri*)!”
Surbhāṇ read aloud from the scriptures (*śāstra*)
Pīr Shams had made such a promise (*kol*).

10:14

And what was this promise? That Pīr Shams and the *imām* or Shāh, as the latter is generically titled in the *gināns*, would come to the fort in Multān and bestow liberation.⁹⁶ This promise and prediction of the arrival of the Shāh or *imām* is reiterated in several *gināns*. The common motif running through them is that the Shāh, bearing his sword Dhulfikār and mounted on his horse Duldul, would arrive in Multān from the West (several *gināns* are more specific and refer to Iraq or Daylamān) with a large army equipped with powerful weapons to attack and vanquish the evil-doers, capture their forts and install the rule of the righteous.⁹⁷ For instance,

In the city of Delhi, Sāheb Rājā will capture the fort and rule;
When the Sāheb arrives, the wicked will flee and the pious will rule. 2:1

The Shāh will come to Multān in Jambudvīpa with the Pāṇḍavas
Attacking the wicked, the Shāh will expel them and himself rule. 2:2

In fact, the Shāh, who promises freedom from the oppressor, is none other than the awaited tenth *avatār* of Viṣṇu.

Naklānī [*avatār*], the bearer of light, has become manifest!
He, the Shāh, rides on the mount of Duldul. 4:2

As pledged, the Shāh will bring justice:
His hands will seize the three-edged sword. 4:3

⁹⁶ The specific name of the *imām* given in this *ginān* is Islām Shāh.

⁹⁷ 2:1, 2; 4:2, 3; 10:14; 22:11.



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There is a strong emphasis on the expectation of the Shāh's arrival, the promise of justice, and the inevitable expulsion of "wicked infidels". The battle imagery and promise of victory against the unjust underscores the political dimensions of the role of the Shāh as *avatār*. Succour is to come not only in terms of the state of immortality, but as concrete victory over an oppressive enemy. In one *ginān*, a curious interjection records:

The Shāh has sent us a message
He has captured the fort and razed it to the ground. 11:20

To continue with the drama of the Queen Surjādevī, what precisely was her mission? What were the disciples of Pīr Shams conveying to her, and vice-versa? We know that the messages were not restricted to religious teachings in a scene where the relations between king and queen reach a climax. The queen has a confrontation with her husband, the so-called demon-king referred to in the *gināns* as Kaliṅga who obviously represents an enemy of the Pīr or the *da'wah*. It would seem that Surjādevī has attempted for some time to convince her husband-king to "convert" to their side, for she says,

O King! For ages and ages I have kept on telling you
That you, O Kaliṅga, are performing evil deeds! 47:11

However, having had no success, she warns her king:

Flee! Flee, O demon Kaliṅga! My Master is coming from the West.
Ninety battalions will be crushed under his horse's shoe!
Alas! When your army is conquered before your very face,
Who will rescue you then, I do not know. 47:1

From the West will beat the claps of many drums.
They will beat to signal the thunders of war!
My Shāh will cry out his orders across the three worlds;
They will instantly herald him as the Sultān. 47:2

Harken! Horses vigorous in step and chariots the speed of wind!
And elephants all beautifully decked out for the Shāh,
Wielding thirty-six weapons, the man who is Nakalaṅkī will mount,
And in fourteen worlds will resound the hail: Victory! Victory! 47:3



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Not to be outstripped by his queen, the king replies angrily:

O Queen! I have three times as many forts all in splendid shape!
Indeed, within their walls the gods earn their living....
My army has more than a million strong, nay infinite is its number!
By contrast, a trifle indeed is the army of your Shāh! 47:6-8

Clearly, this was no puny sovereign and the forces and wealth of his kingdom appear to have been substantial. Somewhat foolhardily, Surjādevī continues to challenge him with praises of the Shāh who will soon come to destroy him. The king must have been generous, for instead of promptly punishing her for treason, he merely rages at her disloyalty, woefully crying:

O Queen! You eat, drink and make merry at the expense of my wealth.
And then you dare to swear, "My Shāh is this and my Shāh is that!"
Oh! Is there such a one here in this city of Cīnab
Who can bring my Queen back to her senses? 47:10

In a fit of temper, the king mounts his steed and rides off to fight the Shāh. There is no indication in the poem itself who wins, but another *ginān* predicts that at the crooked fort at Cīnab, "Kaliṅga will be beheaded." [39:14] Another verse says

At Cīnab, yes at Cīnab, you can hear the tenth demon [cry];
Surjā's husband did not return. O Brother, so be it. 8.29

We surmise from references to a large following at Cīnab and its chaste woman Surjādevī that according to Satpanth tradition, the Shāh had been victorious over the "demon-king". We may never know whether this actually happened, but the account may still hold political significance. For instance, it is plausible that the narrative marked an event in the emergent period of the *daʿwah* in India when a local Hindu kingdom was wrested away by the Sūmrahs who received the help of reserve forces from Alamūt. An interesting question is how come the Queen had such strong Ismāʿīlī sympathies in contrast to her husband-king? Quite possibly, this may have been an instance of the practice of inter-marriage to gain political alliances. An arranged marriage of an Ismāʿīlī woman (such as the daughter of a Sūmrah chief) with a Hindu



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king would have been one way to create social and political connections, and to rally support around the Ismā'īlī cause without undue strife. It would seem then, that this method did not always work. At any rate, the above narrative is an important testimony, even if couched in the form of a heroic religious tale, that when the *da'wah* did not succeed by peaceful means in striking up alliances to advance its cause, on occasion, it may have had to engage in warfare with local Hindu kingdoms.

While it is not possible to present and analyse all the details in the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams, what becomes quickly apparent is the abundance of allusions, nuances, metaphors and narrative episodes that communicate the following themes which appear to have been central to how the *da'wah* was spread: secret missions; conspiracy and alliances; promises of victory and reward; relief from oppression; help as military enforcements; tithe to support the cause; plotted rebellion; the Shāh as refuge and saviour; tests of faith; loyalty and sacrifice as prerequisites to salvation. To illustrate, several *gināns* eulogize the need for and examples of self-sacrifice or martyrdom:⁹⁸

Tear out the roots of evil, O Brother, and the soul will stay pure!
Sever your head and submit it willingly to the Guru;
Then, the Gurunara will become your helper. 26:3

For the sake of my soul, I have relinquished all;
I have come to take refuge in you. 33:8

Hear, O Brother! Listen, O Friend! What did he do for the sake of his soul?
O Friend, he cut off his head and sacrificed it, yes, he cut his head off. 46:4

To balance these verses that may indeed reflect a readiness to sacrifice oneself to the cause are frequent assurances that one's reward lies in the attainment of eternal life in

98 I would like to thank Katherine Young for pointing my attention to an Indian practice of self-willed death and the fact that both Hinduism and Islam have traditions that the warrior who dies in battle will attain heaven. For instance, in India a warrior or servant who pledged to follow his master to death and literally dedicated his life to serving his master was called *veṭevāḷi*. For details, see S. Settar and M. M. Kalaburgi, "The Hero Cult," *Memorial Stones*, eds. S. Settar & G. D. Sontheimer (Delhi: Manipal Power Press, 1982), 17–36.



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the hereafter. The kingdom of the Sāheb is *svarga* (heaven), *amarāpūri* (City of Immortality), and *vaikuṇṭha* (abode of Viṣṇu).

If you follow our orders, you will attain the City of Immortality;
There you will gain endless happiness and protection of the Lord. 61:11

Those who followed the Guru's words attained Heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*);
Recognise our devotees, for they are our servants. 71:1

But equally, there are many assurances that salvation is not only heavenly but earthly, in that military help is anticipated from the Shāh who lives in the West, and who promises a just and liberated society.⁹⁹ In addition to the verses noted above with reference to Surjādevī, the following oath is noteworthy:

Yes Sir! There 'Alī will come with Dhulfikār from the West;
No one will dare challenge him face to face. 41:39

Yes Sir! There Pīr Shams, the soldier of 'Alī, says:
The sky will thunder with hundreds of weapons of the Shāh!
The Sāheb of countless wanderers will mount his horse—
And nothing will be able to arrest his speed. 41:45

Now what can be made of these patterns? As a whole, sufficient references to battle, forts, weapons and conflicts occur to raise serious suspicions that the accounts in the *gināns* are not meant to be allegorical but actual records of a situation of real conflict, albeit captured in the form of a complex and idealized character set that represents friends and enemies. The narratives also reveal that there was perhaps much more complexity at the ground level of the *da'wah's* activity than has been thus far recognised. Although one cannot conclude from the above story that the *da'wah* regularly worked on local rulers through their wives, the occasional application of this strategy is not inconceivable. Such an approach of gaining influence, striking alliances, and seizing control of kingdoms was not unknown at the time. There is a very interesting incident which demonstrates the reverse of the process, that is, a Hindu

⁹⁹ 17:1; 17:5; 41:35; 41:39; 39:12; 47:2



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queen is enticed by the prospect of being “Queen of the Kingdom” by marriage to a Muslim monarch if she conspires against her Hindu king. In Raftery’s translation of the *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, he states in his notes that after Multan was captured from the Ismā‘īlis in 1175 C.E., the Ghūrīd Sulṭān Mu‘izz al-Dīn went on to seize Uch. He then gives Ferishta’s account of the battle as follows:

As he knew that to overcome that Rājah in battle and capture the fort would be arduous, he despatched a person to the wife of the Rājah, *who was despotic over her husband*, and cajoled her, and promised, saying: “If, by your endeavours, this city shall be taken, having contracted marriage with you, I will make you Malikah-i-Jahan. . . .” [emphasis mine].¹⁰⁰

Raftery notes that the Rājah was chief of the Bhaṭṭi tribe, and that according to Ferishta, the ploy worked and the Sulṭān did marry the queen’s daughter. However, both queen and daughter were made Muslims and sent to Ghazni for further instruction, and died there unhappy, “from not having obtained the enjoyment of the Sulṭān’s society.”¹⁰¹ It is impossible to reach any conclusions with this information, but that Muslim rulers used this tactic with some success is worth noting.

The question has been raised earlier whether the *pīrs* dispatched from Iran themselves composed the *gināns* or whether they had their local disciples compose them. The role of the disciples of Pīr Shams seems to suggest that they may have played a pivotal role in articulating the *ginān* tradition. There are a number of *gināns* where the Pīr instructs his disciples to teach his devotees and new followers the practices and doctrines of Satpanth. For instance,

[Surbhāṇ] related to her the Guru’s wisdom (*ginān*)
And they meditated on its teaching (*vcda*)...

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- 100 Minhāj al-Dīn ‘Uthmān b. Sirāj Jūzjānī, *Ṭabakāt-i-Nāṣiri: A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia*, trans. Henry G. Raverty, vol. I (Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint, 1881), 450-451, note 3.
- 101 Ibid.



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"We will impart to you the principles of religion (<i>dharma</i>), But lady, you are the mistress in a demon's house."	10:4
Hari came to the province of Daylamān and then settled in Multān; Vimras, Hari's devotee recited <i>gināns</i> in honour of the Guru.	14:3
"Come to Multān both of you, O King and Queen! I will send you two messengers after six months have passed."	28:68
They all bowed at the Guru's feet and confessed all to him: "Show us, O Swāmī, all about the fellowship of truth."	68:10
"Our devotees are examples of wisdom (<i>ginān</i>)—they will teach you; They are Vimras and Surbhān; they will give support of the truth.	68:11

It may be speculated that the actual names of the disciples, Candrabhāṇ and Surbhāṇ, are pseudonyms which convey this idea of composition. Candrabhāṇ may literally refer to "one who knows *chand* or meter" and Surbhāṇ to "one who knows *sur* or melody". Certainly, this would help to explain their familiarity with the Hindu material, that is, if the composers of the *gināns* were acquainted with Hinduism as Sūmrahs or Hindu converts. It is also conceivable that the early *pīrs* used their disciples not only as messengers, teachers, and composers, but also as translators.

There are several other accounts that relate the conversion of Hindu chiefs and kings, followed by their citizens. For instance, a narrative set in a town called Bhoṭnagar describes episodes leading to the allegiance of a Gaekwāḍ king called Devsingh.¹⁰² Or the narratives describe rulers who are already devout followers of the Pīr, for instance, Rājā Manaśudha and Rāṇī Radīyā in a town called Prem Pāṭaṇ.¹⁰³ In terms of social status, the preponderance of references to rulers and kings should be obvious. Nanji thinks that the conversion of rulers should be interpreted at a symbolic level, and not as a testimony of historical actuality because in "singular contrast" to the earlier Fāṭimid *da'wah* in Sind, the Nizārī *da'wah* in the Indo-Pak subcontinent was,

¹⁰² See *Gināns* 74–77.

¹⁰³ See *Ginān* 28.



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subsequent to the fall of Alamūt, quietist and non-political in orientation.¹⁰⁴ This does not rule out the possibility, however, that if the Nizārī *daʿwah* had begun well *before* Alamūt's fall, it may still have been sufficiently active in Sind politically to establish a vassal state or to reclaim the stake of its predecessors, the Fāṭimids. The preponderance of relations with rulers and their conversions in the *gināns* suggests that there is more to these narratives than merely pious edification. Given the historical context, it is possible to recognise in these stories covert indications of political alliance. It certainly seems reasonable that if the Nizārī *daʿwah* held political ambitions until the time of Alamūt's destruction, it would have continued to channel its energies into winning the favour and support of local chieftains.

If one theorizes that the early beginnings of Satpanth were both political and religious, but that after Alamūt's fall, Satpanth was forced to turn its energies inward and adopt a more spiritual, quietist expression, is it not possible that the *gināns* would reflect this change? I have argued thus far that there are a number of *ginān* narratives, particularly the ones associated with Multān, that indicate a state of tension, intrigue and promise of help. These poems have a concentrated focus on actual battle and victory through the impending arrival of the Shāh, who is represented as the saviour-avatār. It is clearly this promise of success that is at the bottom of the alliances with the Pīr, who gives repeated assurances and pledges of military aid. But the practical dimensions of these promises are easy to miss since they are couched in the language of religious salvation.

It is, in fact, possible to detect a slight difference between those *gināns* in which liberation is clearly associated with victory over an enemy, and those in which it refers primarily to religious salvation. That is, there are *gināns* in the Anthology of Shams,

¹⁰⁴ Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978:68).



specifically, the series of songs called the **Garbīs**¹⁰⁵ which, unlike the *gināns* connected with Surjādevī, promise salvation almost exclusively in terms of the hereafter. A different strategy is used to make the case for the Shāh compelling. Whereas in the above *gināns*, the appeal of the Shāh rests in his military prowess by which he will vanquish oppressors and evil-doers, in the **Garbīs**, the case is built up in terms of a litany of souls saved by the Shāh and his *pīrs*. That is, salvation is spiritual freedom, not political liberation. Since in both instances the language of salvation is found, it is not surprising that the shift in focus would be imperceptible. With the passage of time, as the tradition relinquished its political aspirations, it is likely that allusions to military aid in the *gināns* were interpreted in symbolic terms, and the memory that the earliest allegiances were inspired by promises of worldly as well as spiritual victory were forgotten.

To make this point, let us take a brief look at the **Garbīs**. A caveat should be made, namely, that internal evidence in this cycle of twenty-eight *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams suggests that they may, in fact, belong to a much later date. The most obvious indication is the presence of the names of *imāms* and *pīrs* who lived between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. They are Imām Qāsim Shāh¹⁰⁶ (d. ca. 1370 C.E.) [or Qāsim ‘Alī Shāh? (d. ca. 1750 C.E.)], Imām Islām Shāh¹⁰⁷ (d. ca. 1440 C.E.), Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn¹⁰⁸ (d. ca. 1450 C.E.), Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn¹⁰⁹ (d. ca. 1500 C.E.), and Imām Shāh Nizār¹¹⁰ (d. 1722 C.E.). For instance,

Who holds authority at present? We disclose his name—Shāh Nizār! 82:14

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- 105 *Gināns* 79–106.
106 *Ginān* 83:17; 90:13; 92:7; 95:1; 96:11; 105:4.
107 *Ginān* 92:9.
108 *Ginān* 89:12; 91:11; 99:13.
109 *Ginān* 91:12; 99:13.
110 *Ginān* 82:14.



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Serve the light of the Satgur! Know he is Lord Qāsim Shah.

83:17

One *ginān* cites the names of two *imāms*:

O Careless Ones! Believe in the light of Qāsim Shāh
He is the legitimate heir, *imām* in this age of Kalyug.

92:9

O Careless Ones! Divine light shines in Śrī Islām Shāh!
Recognise that Lord when you see him.

92:9

In all such references to the *imām*, it seems that the purpose of the verses is to identify the name of the current *imām*. It is possible that the existence of three different names which came to coexist in this manner is a result of manuscript transmission, that whereas one name was crossed out and rewritten, the other was not. In any case, the presence of these names raises suspicions about the date of the composition of the **Garbīs** and only a thorough linguistic and content analysis would show definitively how far removed their composition is from the time of Pīr Shams.

The aim here, however, is to show that there appears to be a subtle but significant reorientation in the **Garbīs'** approach to the meaning of salvation and the justification for following the *imām*. Briefly, the **Garbīs** consist of a sequence of twenty-eight folk-songs ranging from eighteen to twenty-two verses each. The word *garbī* has several meanings. In Gujarat, the *garbi* is a popular folk-dance akin to another dance form called the *rāsa*, in which dancers move around in a circle singing and keeping rhythm by clapping their hands and feet. Originally, the word *garbī* referred to an earthen pot with holes on the sides which was used by Hindus as a receptacle for lamps celebrating their deity's luminous presence. Typically, devotees would sing and dance circling the lamp-pot to honour the deity of which it was the receptacle. Women often danced with the pots on their heads. The actual songs sung on such occasions were also called *garbīs*.



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The *Garbīs* attributed to Pir Shams form a narrative about conversion. Woven into the narrative are long sections of instructions and exhortations so that only eight poems actually describe any actions or scene. Briefly, the story is as follows. Pir Shams comes to a town called Analvād to find the villagers celebrating the festival of *nortā*. This is most probably the festival of Navarātrī, which literally refers to the “nine nights” of worship and devotion to the Hindu goddess Durgā or *mātā bhavānī* (the fearsome Mother). The scene is a veritable spectacle of festivities, with five-hundred Hindus dancing and thirty-six *paṇḍits* chanting the Vedas.

The *pīr* watches them worship and adore their idols, and is angered by the image-worship. As a strategy to stop it, he decides to join in the dance, and to sing his own *garbīs*. Night after night, he returns to sing and dance, all the while admonishing the Hindu worshippers for paying homage to idols made of mere stone. Instead, he preaches to them the principles of *sat panth*, the True Path. Finally, one night a brahmin called Śaṅkar leaves the *garbī* dance in disgust. (The narrator has a gloss that poor Śaṅkar lacked *punya* or merit). The rest of the crowd, however, remains to hear the *pīr* because (again the narrator explains) it has realised the secret, namely, that he, Pir Shams, is a saint (*deva*—lit. god). The first to realise this are the remaining thirty-five brahmin *paṇḍits*. Their hearts transformed, they abandon their religious scriptures (*purāṇ*) and there is great rejoicing as they beat their seven drums and cry *jay! jay!* (Victory! Victory!) The villagers, meanwhile, are stunned by this spectacle.

The *pīr* (referred to as Guru) continues singing his songs of wisdom (*gināns*) and, soon enough, word spreads and the princes of the land arrive and join in the dancing. News of the spectacle reaches the king who, with his ministers, comes to hear the much talked-about Guru. Impressed with the latter's miraculous conversion of the *brahmins*, the king, too, prostrates himself at the Guru's feet. Again, the villagers are astonished. In this manner, then, the priests, king, queen, townsfolk and various religious ascetics



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such as the *jogīs*, *sannyāsīs*, and *vairāgīs* all prostrate themselves at the Guru's feet and abandon their gods (*deva*) and scriptures (*śāstra*). A small mountain of strings piles up as they break off and discard their sacred threads. They throw away their *garbī* lamps, which they have worshipped all these nights, into the sea. The Guru then makes them drink holy water (*pāval*) to purify them of past sins. He appoints a leader (*mukhi*) to oversee this new religious community, which is blessed by the sudden vision (*didār*) of the Lord (*nar*) Qāṣim Shāh. Their hearts are filled with divine light (*nūr*), and the story ends with a scene of general rejoicing with the Pīr's songs of wisdom (*ginān*) and circles of dance (*garbī*).

Now, what is of interest to us is the method by which Satpanth is made attractive in the **Garbīs** to this society of Hindus. It is important to note that the **Garbīs** construct a religious framework for conversion, and that the poems focus upon the superiority of the religion that the Pīr is offering to them. Several elements ultimately combine into defining this True Path, or *sat panth*, as the *pīr* calls it in the **Garbīs**. The configuration of religious elements in the context before the Pīr's arrival undergoes a major change by the end of the narrative, but without dramatic upheaval. In the first instance, we have the festival of Navarātrī, the nine days before the celebration of Daserā, when the Goddess Durgā, here referred to as *mātā bhavānī* (fearsome Mother), is worshipped. Hindus, gathered in a temple compound in a town called Analvād, are worshipping *śakti*, the female principle of the Lord Śiva. There are, besides the *garbī* lamp-pot, stone and clay images of the goddess in the temple that they adorn and worship. Their ritual is characterized by revelry and dancing to the accompaniment of song (*gīt* and *garbī*) as well as the recitation of heroic tales (*kathā*) by the brahmin *paṇḍits* from their sacred scriptures (*śāstras*).

Interestingly, all these elements that initially stand out in the narrative are the very ones that are finally rejected. As the Pīr recites his *garbīs*, he invokes by way of association



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other elements intrinsic to the Hindu milieu, including Hindu theories of salvation and Hindu mythology. In other words, the Hindu worldview remains present in the new path that the converts adopt. For instance, common motifs such as the ideal of salvation or liberation from rebirth (*mukṭi*); the attainment of bliss in heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*); the destruction of the effects of past deeds (*karma*); the accumulation of merit (*puṇya*); the saving powers of deities, saints and *avatār* figures; and the traditional veneration for sacred word and scripture (*śāstra*) are all invoked.

Now although many aspects of the Hindu worldview are retained, they are deliberately used as the supporting structure for a new concept of faith. Satpanth also rejects, reorganises and redefines these and other elements internal to the Hindu context. Thus, the Guru tells the Hindus to throw away their idols, which are mere stones, but he entices them with the hope of salvation by conjuring up the image of millions of gods and godlings such as the *yakṣas* and *meghas*, the *kinnars* and *devas* who are all in heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*) attending upon and serving the *guranar* or *satguru* who is none other than the *avatār* of Viṣṇu, the bow-wielder (*sāraṅgapāṇa*) identified as ‘Alī, the first Shi‘ite *imām*. Likewise, the Pīr exhorts the Hindus to pay heed to the *sār* or essence of their *śāstras* whose last *veda* is the Qur‘ān, the message of which he has conveyed in the *gināns*. While retaining the prominence of the Vedas and Purāṇas, the Garbīs reject their pertinence and pronounce them to be archaic, whereas their essence has been freshly expressed in the *gināns*. Thus, the Qur‘ān is proclaimed as the conclusive Veda, the *gināns* capture the gist of the Qur‘ān’s teachings, and Satpanth is, therefore, the True Path and the crowning phase of Hinduism.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ This is not much different from the Qur‘ānic assertion of itself as being the final book and of Islam as being the most perfect of the *ahl al-kitāb* religions.



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In a process much like the *lexique technique* employed by Kabir in his popular phrase, *rāma rahīm kṛṣṇa karīm*, the Garbīs succeed in creating an emotional and cognitive bridge by the juxtaposition and association of Hindu and Ismāʿilī concepts. The coexistence of vocabulary such as *avatār* and *nūr*, *purāṇ* and *kurāṇ*, *sat dharma* and *dīn* by their very proximity construct a language of religious discourse mutually recognised by Hindus and Satpanth Ismāʿilīs.

In all this, what should have become abundantly clear is that the exclusive focus of the Garbīs is religious conversion, practice and salvation. The Hindus who accept the Pir's teaching are portrayed as consciously renouncing their former idols, sacred texts, priests, and rituals of worship and voluntarily adopting Satpanth as their new religion (*dharma*) with its own locus (*satgur-avatār*), its own scripture (*ginān*), its own religious official (*mukhī*), and its own set of rituals (the drinking of holy water or *pāval*, the paying of tithe or *dasonḍ*, and the congregational prayer or *satsang*). Yet, although this True Path is taught in the Garbīs as a *new* path, it is also presented as a continuation of an ancient one. That is, Satpanth is shown to be rooted and vindicated by the primordial Hindu tradition of which it is considered to be the same expression.

Finally, what makes this work a rather good specimen of the inward orientation or non-political and quietist stage of Ismāʿilism is not only that it has little war imagery, but that salvation is truly understood as the salvation of souls. To illustrate:

The <i>imāms</i> are from light; they are ever present in the world.	82:15
Listen to this true wisdom and serve [them];	82:16
Then you will reach the other shore and attain Heaven (<i>svarga</i>).	82:17

This focus on the salvation of souls is underscored by lists in the Garbīs of those persons and souls saved by the *avatār-imām*; they include figures in Hindu mythology such as Dhruva, Hariścandra and the Pāṇḍavas. There are a number of verses that repeat the following claim and promise:



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Rather, serve Sāheb, the creator with firm faith – 81:6
 He who saved in this age of Kalyug twelve crore devout souls. 81:16
 He who in this last period will save countless brave believers. 81:17

Moreover, the *imāms*, who have saved countless souls and rewarded the true and righteous, were none other than the famous *avatārs* of Hindu mythology. Among these saviour figures are Pīr Šadr al-Dīn and Pīr Ḥasan Kabir al-Dīn.

Five crore [were saved] by Prahād who recited the name of Narsimha. 89:7
 Seven crore [were saved] by Hariścandra who was saved by Śrī Rāma. 89:8
 ...
 Twelve crore pious [were saved] by truth in this age of Kalyug. 89:11
 Their rescuer was Pīr Šadr al-Dīn; he saved them all by himself. 89:12
 Numerous will come together with Pīr Šadr al-Dīn, some twelve crore 91:11
 Countless crore will come with Guru Ḥasan Shāh who upheld the Vedās. 91:12

This kind of enumerative list of souls saved, that is, ferried across to the other shore¹¹² (*pahele pār*), occurs several time in the *Garbīs*. An image is created of a heaven filled with divine light (*nūr*) where millions of enlightened souls congregate by the Ganges, and where the 125,000 prophets are also gathered [91:13]. The interiorization of salvation as eternal life in a heavenly abode of bliss is emphasized by the repeated use of the symbol of divine light or *nūr* which would fill the pure souls.

The gathering is filled with the saints (*awliyā*) who bear divine light. 94:12
 The gathering radiates with the *Gurunār* who is full of divine light. 94:13
 O Hindus! On and on why wander in circles? Drink in the pure light. 96:10
 O Hindus! He who lives in Kahak city is the Sāheb—giver of boons. 96:13
 O Hindus! Attaining heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*) you will reign in eternal bliss. 96:14

The theme of promises made by the *nūr* in the Multān *gināns* continues in the *Garbīs*, but this promise is no longer in the form of receiving military aid from the West, or being rescued by the Shāh. Rather, the promise is reconceived as the act of showing the path to and *revealing* the true reality of the Shāh. Thus, the *Garbīs* declare,

¹¹² For a discussion of this metaphor, cf. Katherine K. Young, "Tīrtha and the Metaphor of Crossing Over," *Studies in Religion*, vol 9, no. 1 (1980) 61–68.



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We have come up to your door, [now] recognise us!	101:12
We have kept our promise, [now] what have you to say?	101:13
Countless of souls have not been saved, why remain with them?	101:14
 The <i>pir</i> made a promise and he came—see how he showed them the path!	106:14
The <i>pir</i> explained this word by word to those who would accept Satpanth.	106:16
They were saved, man and woman, when Pir Shams spoke his thoughts.	106:17

Accordingly, the ultimate object of religion as depicted in the **Garbīs** has become the attainment of the divine vision (*dīdār*) and reality of the *imām*. Thus, the *pir* declares

Who enters the religion of Satpanth attains freedom and the divine vision.	99:15
 If your earnings are honest and pure, you will enter Heaven's (<i>svarga</i>) gate.	105:16
O believers, attain the divine vision (<i>dīdār</i>) and your sins will vanish.	105:18

Salvation in the **Garbīs**, therefore, is depicted primarily in spiritual terms, and the one who holds the key to this state of eternal bliss is the *avatār-imām*, the path to whom only the *pīrs* can reveal.

To conclude, then, if the testimony in the *gināns* can be construed to mirror reality at some level, mistily reflecting clues about social, cultural and historical context, it seems that we have some interesting patterns that emerge upon closer inspection of the *gināns* attributed to Pir Shams. There is sufficient evidence to argue that the *gināns* display an unusual degree of interest in historical memory. This effort at realism goes to the point of citing specific dates, places and historical personalities. For instance, there is an unusual verse in the *ginān* titled *Janāzā* (Coffin or corpse) which records that the day that the *Pir* departed Multān was a Thursday, the 17th day of Vaiśakhī. [25:23] One explanation for this recording is that it marks the day when the *Pir* died, and that since then, a fast has been observed on Thursdays.¹¹³ Other verses in the same *ginān* describe how his followers wept when his time to depart neared, and how they then carried his coffin off to Ucch where he was buried [25:21, 24].

¹¹³ Noorally, "Shamsuddin Sabzwari" (1973:84).



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It is also possible to detect contrasts in the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams. We have noted that the *gināns* associated with Multān are consistently connected with fort and battle imagery and predictions of victory over a menacing demon-king. The imagery of conflict in Cīnab (possibly another name for Multān) is portrayed in great detail in the *gināns*. Delhi, too, is cited in one *ginān*, and this remnant may have some remote connection with the unsuccessful revolt (referred to in the previous chapter) of the Ismāʿīlīs in 1236 C.E. headed by a Nūr Turk during the reign of Ilqtūtmish's daughter, Raḍīyya.¹¹⁴ There are scattered references to Ghazni¹¹⁵ where the Pīr first came to preach as a Muslim faqīr from Daylamān.¹¹⁶ *Gināns* that refer to Ucch generally concern the conversion activities of the Pīr and his disciples.¹¹⁷ The contest between the *ṣūfī* saint of Ucch, Bahā al-Dīn Zakariyya, and Pīr Shams, who cursed the former with a pair of horns, is related in another *ginān*.¹¹⁸

What, if anything, can be made of all this material? What is the source of these allusions and motifs? Is it possible that they were derived from the environment experienced by the early *daʿwah*? The unusually vast amount of battle imagery and intrigue in several *gināns* would appear to suggest that they were composed when a situation of real tension and conflict existed. The recurrent forecast that the Shāh would come from the West to seize Multān and save Cīnab with well-armed battalions signals that the area was then under the control of the “wicked,” that is, the opponents of the *daʿwah*. Except for Bahā al-Dīn Zakariyya in Ucch, the opponents in the area are

¹¹⁴ The skirmish is believed to have been an Ismāʿīlī attempt at gaining power in Delhi. Some scholars have identified this Nūr Turk with the Ismāʿīlī Pīr Nūr al-Dīn or Satgūr Nūr as he is popularly known among the Khojah Ismāʿīlīs, but this is uncertain.

¹¹⁵ *Ginān* 14:4, 14; 17:10; 45:1.

¹¹⁶ *Ginān* 14:4; 17:10.

¹¹⁷ *Ginān* 26; 64; 95.

¹¹⁸ *Ginān* 95.



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mainly Hindu and not Muslim, including a figure who evidently was considered to be a rather powerful Hindu monarch. If we do allow, for the sake of discussion, that this testimony in the *gināns* had some connection with the Ismāʿīlī troubles in Multān, firstly, they must refer to a time when the Ismāʿīlīs, though under serious threat, also had a high probability of gaining back control of the region. The promise of reinforcements from Alamūt and the predicted outcome of the “Shāh’s” sovereignty could only have been made when Alamūt was still in power, and when the local Hindu and Sindhi allies of the Ismāʿīlīs, including the Sūmrah dynasty, were still an effective force. After the decline of Alamūt in 1256 C.E. and the fall of the Sūmrahs by the end of the 14th century, pretensions to Ismāʿīlī sovereignty would have been unwise.

Based on the above clues, there appears to be some reason to speculate that the *daʿwah* did attempt to rally the support of Hindu kingdoms, but that some chieftains remained disinterested in striking up alliances. These activities of the *daʿwah* may have coincided with or shortly preceded the waves of Ghūrid incursions against the Ismāʿīlīs of Multān from 1160 C.E. till 1175 C.E., when Muḥammad Ghori supposedly banished Ismāʿīlī influence in the area. Yet, as long as the Nizārī state under Alamūt existed, realistic hopes could have been entertained that Multān eventually would be won back. All this would support placing Pīr Shams well enough within the time of Alamūt rule for him to feel sure of offering military reinforcements and predicting a practical victory.

To address the issue from another angle, Ansar Khan points out in an article on the Ismāʿīlīs in Multān that the city was the centre of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* from the tenth to fifteenth century. He further adds that “during the 13th and 14th century, the Ismāʿīlī Sūmrah chiefs were dominant in Sind and, therefore, concerted efforts were made to



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win back the lost territory in Multan.”¹¹⁹ This period is somewhat later than our own analysis would suggest, but it supports the drift of the internal testimony in the *gināns* a propos political conflict. That is, while Muḥammad Ghori may ostensibly have put an end to Ismāʿīlī rule in Multān in 1175 C.E., the Ismāʿīlī Sūmrahs and their allies in Sind may have offered continued hope of restoring Ismāʿīlī control over the region.

In our earlier discussion of battle imagery surrounding Multān and Cīnab, we suggested that the positive forecasts found in the *gināns* could only have been made had confidence existed that the Ismāʿīlīs possessed sufficient political force to regain power. In all, the above points combine to suggest that Pīr Shams was an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* who came to Western India from Ghazna in Sabzawār and worked to establish Ismāʿīlī affiliations in Sind from a basis in Multān during the Alamūt period, and at a time when the Ismāʿīlī alliance with the Sūmrahs was secure. The tomb in Ucch, Multān, most likely belongs to this Ismāʿīlī *pīr*.

As for the dating of Pīr Shams, it has been noted that the dates that are cited in the *gināns* (1118 C.E.; 1143 C.E. & 1150 C.E.) differ from the dates given in the genealogy or *shajarah* (1165–1276 C.E.) preserved by the keepers of his shrine by almost half a century. These dates may be associated with the activities of earlier *dāʿīs*. However, the fact that they have been mentioned in connection with the two disciples of Pīr Shams complicates matters. That these dates may not be reliable is suggested by the inconsistency between the fact that, on the one hand, the *gināns* constantly refer to these two disciples as the “two youths”, and on the other hand, the dates posit a gap of some thirty-two years between the time when Surbhāṇ allegedly received Pīr Shams (1118 C.E.) and when Candrabhāṇ converted (1150 C.E.).

¹¹⁹ Zahid, “Ismaʿilism” (1975:41).



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The dates given in the *shajarah*, though they over-extend the life of Pīr Shams (perhaps to make it coincide with that of the *ṣūfī* saint and rival of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah*, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zakariyya, who died in 1277 C.E.), appear to be worth serious consideration for the following reasons. Firstly, since the birthdate of Pīr Shams given in the *shajarah* is 1165 C.E., this would mean that the life and activities of Pīr Shams followed the declaration of the *Qiyāmah* in 1164 C.E. If Pīr Shams did play a seminal role in the articulation of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, and this appears to have been the case, the declaration of the *Qiyāmah*, which effectively disengaged the formalities and ritual laws of the faith from its principles, would have made this renewed articulation possible and permissible.

Given the internal evidence of alliances and political conflict attached to his activities in Multān as well as our knowledge of the history of Sind in the twelfth century, it seems reasonable to suggest that the major activities of Pīr Shams took place in the latter half of the twelfth century. The testimony preserved in the *gināns* alluding to political conflict, fort imagery and victory over an insurgent Hindu king suggest the possibility that Pīr Shams was engaged in the region around the time of the Ghūrid invasions which culminated in Ismāʿīlī massacres in 1175 C.E. The allusions in the *ginān* narratives depict a situation both of conflict and difficulty (hence the plea for “liberation”), and a promise of help, victory and security. The time between the Ghūrid attacks on Sind and the fall of Alamūt would have been filled with a similar tension and ambiguity. On the one hand, the Ismāʿīlīs in Sind, with their Sūmrah base, were under attack, but on the other hand, their centre in Alamūt represented a well-known and established power-base.

We have attempted to show that the *Garbīs*, which are also attributed to this *pīr*, in fact, represent a much later phase of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah's* activity. Not only do these poems associate Pīr Shams with historical persons who lived between the



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fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, but in contrast to the Multān–Cīnab narratives, they attach a clearly apolitical, purely religious significance to salvation. It is likely that as the area of Multān was increasingly subjugated, and as *ṣūfī* orders such as the state-affiliated Suhrawardī *ṭarīqah* gained ground in the region, the Ismāʿīlīs migrated south towards Lower Sind and Gujarat. The setting of the narratives in the Garbīs, a place called Analwāḍ—which may be the town Anhilwāḍ in Gujarat—is in consonance with the fact that the subsequent centre of Ismāʿīlī activity moved away from northwestern India and towards the region of Mālwā, Kāthiāwāḍ and Gujarat.

The *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams that refer to his activities around the Multān area also contain allusions that suggest that he preached during the eve of the growing presence of rival *Ṣūfī ṭarīqahs* in Multān. While it is equivocal whether Pīr Shams actually confronted the *Ṣūfī* saint, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zakariyya, the legendary contest between the two records the threat that institutionalized and state-affiliated *Ṣūfism* may have posed to the Satpanth *daʿwah* during this period. That the Ismāʿīlīs nonetheless continued their political activities in the region is evidenced by their unsuccessful attempt to seize control in Delhi, the political centre of North India, in 1236 C.E. under the reign of Queen Raḍiyya. Whether she was the same Queen Radiyādevī mentioned in the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams is impossible to ascertain; however, this may be a clue that his life extended to this period, and that Pīr Shams had some connection with this uprising.

Although there is much by way of speculation here, this is inevitable given the nature of our sources, and the lack of other historical information on this figure as well as the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* in Sind at the time. Based on this analysis and pending the discovery of further materials, it may be concluded that the Pīr Shams of the *gināns* in the Anthology translated here was a *pīr* of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* who played a critical role in advancing the latter's political aspirations in Sind, as well as in articulating the



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religious foundations of Satpanth Ismā'īlism. Most likely, this figure hailed from Sabzawār, came to India as a youth, and lived sometime between the mid-twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries. His principal area of activity radiated from a base in Multān, and he lies buried in Ucch in a tomb popularly known as "Shāh Shams."



CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In his *farmān* quoted at the beginning of this dissertation, the present Āghā Khān, Prince Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, calls the *ginān* literature of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs a “wonderful tradition,” and expresses his concern to his followers that unless it is continued, “we will lose some of our past which is most important to us.”¹ This comment is noteworthy since it reflects the judgment of the *imām* who is apprehended by the Ismāʿīlīs as the prime authority on matters of the *ṭarīqah* (way, path). But why do the *gināns* represent a wonderful tradition, and what do they preserve of the past that ought to be significant?

Before the full dimensions of what is “so special, so unique, and so important”² about the *ginān* tradition can be known, a great deal more scholarly research on this subject will be required. That the subject has received scant attention in the field of Ismāʿīlī studies has been noted. In general, research on Ismāʿīlism has been concentrated on the first half of the history of the sect leading up to the Mongol devastation of Alamūt in the thirteenth century. This may be attributed to the fact that during this first half of its history, the Ismāʿīlī sect persisted in its efforts to secure a political basis for its theocratic vision of Islam governed under the imāmate. At the same time, the Ismāʿīlīs

¹ *Farmān* made in Dacca, October 17, 1960.

² *Farmān* made in Karachi, December 16, 1964.



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operated within the intellectual, ethnic and linguistic context of the larger Middle-eastern Muslim world. Thus, for instance, such illustrious thinkers as Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, Ḥamīd al-Kirmānī, al-Muʿayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw of the Fāṭimid period have drawn great interest.

We have endeavoured to show that the neglect of the history of the sect after the demise of the Ismāʿīlī state centred at Alamūt, and in particular, the scant attention paid to the development known as Satpanth Ismāʿīlism may be rooted in the questionable presuppositions that the political, orthodox and classical aspects of religions are their most important—and thus, attention-worthy—manifestations. It has been noted that Satpanth Ismāʿīlism has generally been identified as a post-Alamūt development, and characterized as apolitical, heterodox and folkloric. Yet, this study has shown that, in fact, the genesis of Satpanth may reach back before the Nizārī–Mustaʿli split in 1094 C.E., and that its origins were not exclusively religious, but also political. It is remarkable that although Satpanth Ismāʿīlism represents more than seven centuries, that is, well over half the life of the Shīʿah Ismāʿīlī sect, specialists in Ismāʿīlī studies have failed to acknowledge this phase as a major and distinctive category in their schemata of Ismāʿīlī history.

To account for this gap by pleading a case of meagre sources for Satpanth Ismāʿīlism is groundless. Although the process of islamization within the sect has recently raised the problem of access to manuscripts, the fact is that ample primary sources exist and are available for a careful and thorough investigation of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. Comprising a little over one thousand works, the *ginān* tradition represents a significant corpus of sacred literature. To date, only three works have been translated for academic purposes, although the existence of this material was brought to the attention of the academic community over half a century ago by Ivanow. Since progress in the area of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism is premised on the availability, in scholarly translations, of this vast literary



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heritage, the extensive translation of the Anthology of *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams that is offered here makes a necessary step in the advancement of this scholarly endeavour.

This study has found that not only have certain troublesome presuppositions retarded the study of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, but that they have also framed the context in which what little is known of this tradition has been understood. By taking a more historical and phenomenological approach to the subject, several theories and interpretations of the significance of Satpanth literature have had to be re-examined. Of these, the following are most crucial to our discussion. Firstly, Satpanth literature has been explained repeatedly as the creative and literary endeavours of Ismāʿīlī *pīrs* to effect and facilitate conversion of Hindus to Nizārī Ismāʿīlism. The literature has been considered to be the crucial means by which Hindus were convinced to adopt the Ismāʿīlī faith. Secondly, the intermixture of Hindu and Muslim ideas in the *gināns* has consequently been explained as the result of the *pīrs* strategy of conveying Nizārī Ismāʿīlī ideas through Hindu symbols and concepts. The mixture (for some scholars, hogdgepodge) of various Hindu, Tantric, Vaiṣṇava and Ismāʿīlī ideas in the *gināns* has thus been justified as an expedient means of bridging the gap between dramatically different worldviews. Thirdly, it has been held that Satpanth Ismāʿīlism was not linked to the earlier, Fāṭimid Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* in Sind, but that it was a completely separate development. This is then demonstrated by the fact that in contrast to the Ṭayyibīs, who maintained the Fāṭimid intellectual tradition, Satpanth Ismāʿīlism displays little knowledge of this heritage. And finally, Satpanth Ismāʿīlism has been characterized as a quietistic, meditative, and mystically oriented development in the history of the Ismāʿīlī sect. That is, the political aspirations of Ismāʿīlism either ceased with this phase or were dormant.



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A closer investigation of the historical circumstances in Sind and the greater Ismāʿīlī world at the eve of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism and a careful scrutiny of the testimony of its sacred tradition about its own beginnings has revealed, however, that the above theories and perspectives need to be revised. It has been argued that the roots of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism are, in fact, far more complex than has been hitherto recognised. The explanation that religious conversion was achieved primarily through the literary creativity of the *pīrs* is somewhat simplistic. While it may help explain the syncretic nature of the *ginān* tradition, it fails to address the sociological and political dimensions in the creation of a new religious community. This study has brought to light the fact that crucial social and political factors were at play at the embryonic stage of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, and that its formation was closely connected to historical events in Sind and in Ismāʿīlī territories.

To summarize briefly, this research shows that the seeds of an indigenous form of Ismāʿīlism, which later came to be called Satpanth, were probably planted in the first half of the eleventh century. With the threat posed by the invading Ghaznawids at the end of the tenth century, the Ismāʿīlī practice of alliance with Hindu kingdoms to face a common oppressor began around 1001 C.E. with the pact made between the Fāṭimid governor of Multān, Abū al-Faṭḥ Dāʿūd b. Naṣr and the Kashmir king, Anandpāl. While it is clear that the Fāṭimids did not encourage a policy of religious accommodation, it seems that they did succeed in gaining the allegiance of indigenous Sindhi groups who had already converted to Islam and intermarried with Arab Muslims. The Sūmrahs were one such group, and as we know, they seem to have retained several Hindu customs.

After the brutal Ghaznawid massacres of the Ismāʿīlīs in Sind between 1010–1025 C.E., both in Multān and al-Manṣūrah, the ethnically Arab Ismāʿīlī population in the region was sharply reduced. That Fāṭimid activity continued in the region is evident



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from letters of the Fāṭimid caliph, al-Mustaṣṣir, confirming appointments of *dāʿīs* from Yaman. With the split of the sect after the caliph's death in 1094 C.E., the Fāṭimid *daʿwah* in India fell into the hands of the Ṣulayḥids, and this *daʿwah*, which later came to represent the Ṭayyibis, was apolitical, Arab-based and active principally in the Cambay or Gujarat region. The fact that less than a century later, the Ghūrids came to Upper Sind in 1165 C.E. to destroy the Ismāʿīlīs in Multān suggests, however, that a politically active current of Ismāʿīlism was still alive in Sind after the Nizārī–Mustaʿli split. We have attempted to show that this faction was probably led by the Sūmrahs who must have supported the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs in Persia after the split. The evidence also appears to suggest that the local Sindhi forces which rallied around the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī cause were composed of a network of minor Hindu kingdoms facing a common oppressor. Thus, whereas the Ghaznawids had attacked an ethnically Arab-based Ismāʿīlī population between 1010–1025 C.E., by the time the Ghūrids attacked Multān again between 1165–1175 C.E., the Ismāʿīlī forces were dominantly constituted of indigenous chiefs and their resources, and perhaps some reinforcements from the Nizārī state.

The period between the Sūmrah recapture of Lower Sind in 1051 C.E. and the Ghūrīd attack of the Ismāʿīlīs in Multān in 1165 C.E. is most likely the crucible in which the social basis of an indigenous Ismāʿīlī community was forged through intermarriages, political alliances and a common cause requiring mutual trust and support. The social interaction and intermixture of customs and identities resulting from such alliances would have, no doubt, created a fertile ground for the exploration and exchange of religious and cultural ideas. It is likely that these primary alliances and a mixed Sūmrah identity came to form the nucleus of the Satpanth Ismāʿīlī community. However, whereas the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs in Persia would have comprehended the value of political alliances with Sindhi Hindu kingdoms, it is another question whether they would have



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comprehended or welcomed the new evolution of religious ideas gestating in Sind. The declaration of the *Qiyāmah* by Ḥasan II ʿala Ḍhikrihi al-Salār in 1164 C.E., therefore, may not have been limited to establishing his own claim to imāmate; it may also have been a prescient legitimization by the head of Alamūt of what already was in process under the Nizārī *daʿwah* in Sind. At any rate, the separation of form from spirit implied by the doctrine of *qiyāmah* would have legitimized and given impetus to a nascent Satpanth identity in Sind. Even if it were to retain many Hindu concepts and practices, the task of the *pīrs* of the *daʿwah* in India would have been to ensure that at the core of this new religious formation called Satpanth, an Ismāʿīlī identity was celebrated and upheld. This they did successfully, for instance, by their pivotal placement of Satpanth as the culmination of Hinduism, and the Ismāʿīlī *imām* as the long-awaited, tenth *avatār* of Viṣṇu.

Without the allusions discovered in the *gināns* of Pīr Shams, there would have been little reason to suspect the political foundations of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism given its later development. The fatal end to Ismāʿīlī power with the fall of Alamūt decisively hid these origins. By evolving an identity that was integral to the Indian environment, Satpanth Ismāʿīlism survived and flourished in India. It is conceivable that the Ismāʿīlīs of Sind subsequent to the Mongol disaster continued to hold some political aspirations, but with the Ismāʿīlī exodus from Persia coupled with the growing influence of state-aligned Ṣūfism in the area, these aspirations must have been short-lived. The evolving Satpanth Ismāʿīlī identity—with its organic relationship to Hinduism and the Indian environment—helped to shield this sect which otherwise would have risked extinction had its true identity been known.

The theme of liberation which was at the heart of its origin, and was once a question of political reality, was easily transformed into a quest for spiritual emancipation. In analysing the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams, this shift has been demonstrated. Clearly,



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Satpanth Ismāʿīlism and the *ginān* tradition had to evolve a more inward, pacifist and mystically oriented form. The literature preserves dimly through sacred narrative and the language of symbols an image of this liberation movement and how the Satpanth *pīrs* faced the challenge of their changed circumstances. The wealth of allusions to rivalry, intrigue, and battle together with promises of aid and victory from the West in the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams suggest that he himself belonged not to the quietistic period of Satpanth, but to its early activist, formative period. Based on the consonance between these allusions and the external events occurring in Sind and the Nizārī state, we have concluded that Pīr Shams most probably lived and worked during the century preceding the destruction of Alamūt and at a time when the Ismāʿīlīs were still in power.

This study has attempted to glimpse what may be found in the *gināns* about the past that is of relevance to an understanding of Ismāʿīlī history. In helping raise questions about its origin, the investigation has been rewarded with some critical insights. But what of the claim that it is a wonderful tradition? This points to another aspect of the *ginān* literature that may offer a rich and fruitful area of inquiry. A corollary of the conversion theory is the unproven assertion that Satpanth Ismāʿīlism is an Indian form of Nizārī Ismāʿīlism. This premise has fostered analyses which essentially conclude that Nizārī Ismāʿīlī ideas were merely grafted onto a Šūfī, Tantric or Vaiṣṇava substratum of religious ideas; or conversely, that works from the latter sects were simply appropriated with minor adjustments into the Satpanth corpus of sacred literature. If one were to seek (following Cantwell Smith's maxim that Islam is what a Muslim says it is)³ the meaning of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism on its own terms, it would be

³ "The most important single matter to remember in all this is that ultimately we have to do not with religions but with religious persons." (18) For a terse and rewarding discussion of his ideas, see Wilfred C. Smith, *The Faith of Other Men* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).



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possible to discover the internal system of coherence that reveals the principles of selection at the basis of the various influences on Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. This understanding, however, is possible only if the specific configuration of religious ideas and symbolism of Satpanth is understood as it is self-constructed, and not by the yardstick of Fāṭimid or Nizārī concepts.

What becomes quickly apparent through a sustained and systematic analysis of the *ginān* literature is that it is an integral part of a larger religious system of ritual performances and symbolic relationships that construct a totality encompassing a sacred community and its worldview. The elements of Satpanth religion, ritual, and social patterns of behaviour that define and construct the reality of this sect are to be found imbedded in its sacred literature. It is thus not surprising that the British court was able to establish the identity of the sect based on the evidence of the *gināns*. The critical role of the *gināns* in articulating the central concepts of Satpanth, as well as its requisite duties, is evident in the *gināns* of Pīr Shams which convey teachings on the topics of the *avatār*, the *ghaṭpāṭ* ceremony and the paying of the tithe or *dasonḍ*. The *gināns* have articulated, to borrow from Clifford Geertz, a “machinary of faith” and “systems of significance” for Satpanth Ismāʿīlism.⁴

However, as the Satpanth counterpart of the Hindu *veda* or *śāstra*, the *gināns* of the *pīrs* go much beyond evolving a worldview and furnishing the ritualistic and symbolic components necessary to maintaining an indigenous religious community. As a musical, literary, and inspired tradition, the *gināns* constitute a religious performance that sustains the primary dimension of religious experience. For the faithful, this means reaching beyond thought and deed to express and celebrate, through hymn and

⁴ Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Developments in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 18–19.



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invocation, the pathos and devotion that feeds a religious life. It has been noted that for centuries, the recitation of *gināns* has been an intrinsic part of daily Satpanth worship. In addition to understanding the rich content of the *gināns*, what also needs to be carefully investigated is the performative aspects of this heritage, including the nature of its melodies and their modes of transmission, its various contexts of performance, and the impact of modern conditions on its ritual role and significance. These few areas will constitute, I hope, the focus of my future research.



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PART B

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INTRODUCTION TO THE ANTHOLOGY OF GINĀNS ATTRIBUTED TO PĪR SHAMS

Arrangement

The preface in the Gujarati edition of the Anthology of *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams states that it was the second in a series of books to be published by the Ismailia Association of India to present the *jamā'at* (community) with the collected works of different Ismā'īlī *pīrs*. It further notes that the *gināns* collected in the present volume were compiled from various *ginān* manuscripts (*pothī*) and books (*copaḍī*) that contained other miscellaneous works in addition to the *gināns* of different Ismā'īlī *pīrs*.¹ It appears that systems of classifying *gināns* in the manuscript tradition varied over time. The earliest extant manuscripts classify *gināns* according to their ritual use and ceremonial context, a fact which suggests that many "*gināns* were composed for the purpose of relating ritual to the new set of doctrines adopted by the recent converts."² (We have already noted earlier the close link between *ginān* recitation and the performance of Satpanth rituals). Another criteria of classification appears to have been length: some effort was made to keep longer *gināns* in one volume and shorter ones in another. This practice continued in the lithographed and printed editions of the *gināns*.

¹ For a description of the types of materials found in *ginān* manuscripts, see the Introduction in Ali. S. Asani's *The Harvard Collection of Ismaili Literature in Indic Languages: A Descriptive Catalog and Finding Aid* (Riverside: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992), 1–20 (author's typescript).

² Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition* (1978: 15).



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In rare instances, *gināns* appear also to have been classified according to their tunes (*rāg*).

While one might have expected that *gināns* would have been classified in manuscripts by the *pīr* who allegedly composed them, or by virtue of having similar themes, this is not, in fact, the case. In general, extant *ginān* manuscripts contain a selection of *gināns* by various *pīrs*. To determine which *ginān* is attributed to whom, therefore, one must refer to the signature line. Since shorter *gināns* are unmarked by titles and scattered as individual units throughout a *ginān* manuscript, this makes the task of locating any one individual *ginān* extremely difficult.³ Zawahir Noorally (now Moir) also points out that *ginān* manuscripts exhibit a somewhat personal and idiosyncratic character. Individual volumes generally belonged either to specific families or *jamā'at khānahs*, and essentially contained “*gināns* of their choice and collection.”⁴ Thus, if on one's travels, one heard a *ginān* that one liked, it was duly recorded and brought back to one's own family and *jamā'at* (community). According to Noorally, this accounts for why “certain *gināns* which are recited frequently appear often in the collection.”⁵ Once the process of organizing and compiling the tradition began toward the end of the last century, more attention was paid in manuscripts and books of this period to such things as alphabetical order, neatness and beautiful lettering, and classification by *pīr*.

At any rate, the Gujarati edition of the Anthology of the 106 *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams is not arranged by any special order: not by subject, ritual, or length. The *gināns* are simply compiled together from earlier sources with their signature line (*bhaṇitā*) as

³ Occasionally, however, *ginān* manuscripts contain a *tafsilo* or a list of *ginān* incipits given in serial order, which is placed either in the middle or at the end of the volume.

⁴ Zawahir Noorally, “Khojki Manuscripts,” unpublished manuscript (n.d., 1).

⁵ Ibid., 1.



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the marker of authorship. The table of contents lists, according to the Gujarati alphabet, the first line of each *ginān*, that is, its incipit. In general, short *gināns* are identified or “tagged” by their first line. This approach has some odd results. For instance, the individual compositions in the cycle of twenty-eight *Garbīs*, instead of being listed under one title, are divided up as single poems. It is possible that over time, as longer works were sung less frequently in one sitting, individual compositions such as those in the *Garbīs* came to be treated as individual *gināns*.

The table of contents of the Anthology, then, is an index of incipits and this organization reveals the function and meaning of the *ginān* collection to its users. Lacking any organization by theme or subject, the Anthology of Pīr Shams underscores the idea stressed earlier, namely, that *gināns* were not commonly read nor studied as literature per se, rather, they were recited and experienced as an oral teaching and a form of worship. The Anthology is organized like a song book, and its indexed table of contents quickly refers the singer to the page of the *ginān* that s/he may wish to recite. From the point of view of the compiler of the Gujarati edition, it seems that the main purpose of providing indexed incipits as the table of contents was to help direct the reciter to the specific page of the *ginān* the reciter had in mind.

Language

Ivanow's characterization of the *ginān* literature as “polyglottic” also applies to the Anthology of *gināns* of Pīr Shams. Not only does the Anthology as a whole include *gināns* composed in different Indian languages, but individual *gināns* are permeated with loan words and vocabulary drawn from different dialects as well as the languages of Arabic and Persian. *Gināns* exist in six languages: Punjabi, Sindhi, Multāni (or Saraiki, a mixture of Sindhi & Punjabi), Hindi (or Sādhukaḍī Bolī), Kutchi and Gujarati. Except for a few *gināns* in Punjabi and Sindhi, and some in Hindi, most of



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the *gināns* in the Anthology are in Gujarati. Whatever the Indian language, however, a notable characteristic of the *gināns* in the Anthology is their common use of certain key Arabic or Persian terms, for instance, *shāh*, *khudāwand*, *pīr*, *nūr*, and Qurʾān to name a few.

Several explanations have been advanced to account for the polyglottic nature of the *gināns*. Nanji speculates that, "The language in which the *gināns* exist reflect the areas from which the manuscripts originate,"⁶ namely, Sind, Punjab, Multān or Gujarat. We may call this the "manuscript-locale theory." G. Allana advances a "travel theory," namely, that the Ismāʿīlī pīrs composed in different languages because "they did not have a fixed abode in one city or village. They wandered all over Sindh, Punjab, Gujarat, Kathiawar, Cutch, spreading the message of Islam."⁷ Thus, the reason why *gināns* are polyglottic, or possess loan words from several regional dialects, is because the pīrs had to travel through different regions, and they incorporated or modified their compositions to fit the linguistic needs of their specific milieu.⁸ Allana reaffirms the Satpanth belief that the pīrs had great musical and linguistic talents, and composed *gināns* in "thirty-six tones and forty-two languages" (presumably dialects in this case).

The third explanation, which I call the "translation theory," is given by Ivanow who argues that *gināns* must have been originally composed either in Sindhi or Multāni, "but, while spreading to other provinces, these became translated into local dialects."⁹ In fact, Ivanow was convinced that "in the case of those [*gināns*] in Gujarati and

⁶ Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978: 9).

⁷ Allana, *Ginans of Ismaili Pirs* (1984: 44). However, Allana also reasons in the opposite direction, namely, that if *gināns* exist in a specific language, the pīrs must have preached in the region where it is spoken. Thus, he argues that although "There is no recorded proof that they went from Gujarat and Kathiawar to the Hindi speaking parts of India. But the fact that there are many *ginans* written in Hindi indicate that they must have gone there." Ibid., 37.

⁸ Ibid., 33, 44.

⁹ Ivanow, "Satpanth" (1948: 40).



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Marāṭhi, there can be little doubt that they are fairly modern renderings of the earlier ones.”¹⁰ Accordingly, he doubts whether it can ever be ascertained which *gināns* are original and which are translations. Agreeing that the polyglottic nature of *gināns* can be attributed to their translation and adaptation to other linguistic regions, Asani adds that early in this century, in the process of producing printed versions of *gināns* in the Gujarati script, “many *gināns* seems to have incorporated elements from Gujarati – the language spoken by a substantial segment of the community.”¹¹

As noted earlier, most of the *gināns* in the Anthology are in Gujarati or a “gujaratified” Hindi. If the compositions do, in fact, originate from the work of Pīr Shams who preached mainly in Sind and Multān, then the translation theory may help to explain why so many of his compositions now exist in Gujarati or Hindi. Unless manuscripts dating back to the time of Pīr Shams are found, and we are able to make comparisons, it will not be known for sure to what extent these *gināns* have remained faithful to their originals. As we have discussed previously, however, a case can be made that in general, one can expect more on the side of “conservation” rather than “alteration” of form and content in the transmission and preservation of the *gināns*. There may be some truth in all of the above theories. What they commonly point to, however, is the complex linguistic nature of the *ginān* tradition.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ali S. Asani, “The Ginān Literature of the Ismailis of Indo-Pakistan: Its Origins, Characteristics, and Themes,” *Folk Sources of the Bhakti Tradition*, ed. D. Eck & F. Mallison, Gröningen Oriental Series, vol. VIII (Gröningen & Paris: Egbert Forsten and École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1991), 8.



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Poetry

While we cannot go into the details of the linguistic problems raised by the *gināns* in the Anthology, a few remarks can be made on the effect of their linguistic nature on the poetic and prosodic form of the *gināns*. In common with traditional regional forms of Indian verse, *gināns* generally take the form of *dohās* (couplets) or *caupāis* (quatrains). Typically, the *dohā* is a two-line verse consisting of twenty-four *mātrās* (accents), and the *caupāi* consists of four lines with sixteen *mātrās* each. Longer *gināns* often have both *dohās* and *caupāis*, as well as *ślokas*, two-line verses of 16 *mātrās*.¹² A scansion of the *gināns* in the Anthology reveals quickly their irregular nature. Both Nanji and Asani attribute this imprecision to "negligence in transmission and linguistic acculturation."¹³ The translation theory described above may also help to explain the linguistic and prosodic inconsistencies found in the *gināns*.

Although the metrical and prosodic features of the *gināns* in the Anthology are irregular, nonetheless, the *gināns* preserve a strong semblance to verse and song. Most verses in the *gināns* regularly end in rhyme or have a refrain (*varaṇī*, *tek*), conveying the impression of poetry. For instance, the verses of several *gināns* end simply in a consonant followed by a long "ā" (*liyā/dharyā/paḍiyā/gatīyā*) or followed by "oī" or "ohī" (*koi koi/sohī sohī/dhoī dhoī/roī roī/hoī hoī*). Often, endings are appended onto the final word of verses in order to create the rhyme (using suffixes such as "re" or "jī" which may have no intrinsic meaning, but rather, an exclamatory effect: *kājare/pārare/dāsare/deśare/pāyare*).¹⁴ Much more work needs to be done on the analysis of the poetic and prosodic features of the *gināns* to assess how certain

¹² Ibid., 9, n. 25.

¹³ Ibid., 9; Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Tradition* (1978: 20).

¹⁴ *Gināns* 6, 12, 14 and 29 respectively.



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linguistic features are utilized to create this sense of poetry and rhyme. By a close study of these repeated elements and formulae, it may be possible to define stylistic features that distinguish *gināns* from other similar devotional forms, for instance, the Indian *gīt* and *bhajan*.

In addition, all *gināns* typically end with a *bhaṇitā* or signature line (also called *chāp*, that is, stamp) that identifies the composer of the work.¹⁵ As an identification of the composer, the principal function of the signature line is authentication and validation. The association of the *ginān* with a *pīr*'s name legitimizes it and sanctifies it. In terms of recitation, the *bhaṇitā* usually marks the conclusion of the *ginān*. In the case of particularly long *gināns* that cannot be sung in full, the current practice is to skip over to the final verse that contains the signature line.¹⁶

The *ginān* corpus contains works that range from short hymns of four to five verses in length to poems that are over one thousand verses long. In general, short *gināns* have no titles and are identified by their first line or incipit, while long compositions called *granth*s do bear titles, for example, *Brahma Prakāśa*, *Das Avatār* or *Būjh Nirāñjan*. The Anthology of *Pīr Shams* contains two long compositions, the *Garbīs*, a sequence of twenty-eight songs meant to accompany a circle dance of the same name; and a *ginān* (with no title) which starts with the line *Prema pāṭaṇa rājā* and is ninety-

15 Ivanow wonders whether this line (which is often in the form, "this *ginān* of *Pīr so-and-so*") means that it is a composition *by* the *pīr*, or whether it is a composition *about* the *pīr*. He favours the latter interpretation. See Ivanow, "Satpanth," (1948: 41).

16 The implications of this trend to shorten *gināns* to three or four verses due to the brief duration of the evening prayer will need to be studied. With only half an hour for evening services, the recitation of *gināns* in *jamā'at khānahs* has been limited to five to seven minutes, in which time only a few verses can be sung. Many reciters routinely sing only portions of a *ginān*. This trend is particularly apparent among *Ismā'īlīs* settled in the Western world. Combined with a lack familiarity with the languages of the *ginān* tradition, this practice, which is presently justified by convenience, may be a precursor to the gradual decline of this heritage.



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nine verses long. It also contains a category of *gināns* known as *joḍilo*, that is, connected or tied together. These are typically *gināns* that are strung together on the basis of a common author, theme or narrative sequence. The Anthology contains one set of eighteen *joḍilos*. Often, long *gināns* will have two versions (sometimes totally unrelated), called the major (*moṭo* or *vaḍho*) and minor (*nāno* or *nindho*). For instance, the Anthology contains a *ginān* titled *Nāno Das Avatār*, which describes the ten *avatārs* (forms) of Viṣṇu in ten verses. While short *gināns* generally do not have titles, three short *gināns* in the Anthology bear the following titles: **Popaṭ anc Surjā Rāṇī Vāt** (Conversation between the Parrot and Queen Surjā); **Janājo** (The Burial or the Bier); and **Caūd Ratna** (Fourteen Jewels).

Content and Themes

The tone of the *gināns* in the Anthology of Pīr Shams ranges from prosaic preaching to fervent devotion, and the style of the poems is primarily didactic. G. Allana categorizes *gināns* as a whole into two groups: *gināns* that seem to be directed to a Hindu audience, and whose purpose is conversion; and *gināns* composed for the newly converted, whose purpose is to teach them the rudiments of their new faith.¹⁷ This is generally true of the *gināns* in the Anthology, and parallels Nanji's broad characterization of the two phases of the tradition as a whole: emergence and consolidation. However, given the analysis of the *gināns* presented in this dissertation, I would emphasize that at the stage of emergence, the meaning of "conversion" had both political and religious connotations. Indeed, at this stage, conversion in the sense of political alliance may well have preceded conversion in the sense of religious affiliation. With the stage of consolidation, however, conversion to Satpanth would

¹⁷ Allana, *Ginans of Ismaili Pirs* (1984: 39).



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have lost its early political implications, and denoted primarily religious initiation and transformation.

Asani has classified the *gināns* of the Satpanth tradition into five major themes “according to the theme of greatest importance:” Conversion; Eschatology; Moral Conduct; Mysticism; and Festivals or Special Rituals.¹⁸ While Asani's five major categories are present in the Anthology of *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams, it is often impossible to designate precisely the subject or topic of specific *gināns* under the heading of conversion, or moral instruction, or eschatology, because often an individual *ginān* will cover several topics. For example, although Ginān 36 in the Anthology is ostensibly about meditation or the mystical path, it is also about conversion in as much as it criticizes both the Hindu and the Muslim for not knowing where the truth lies. Similarly, there are many *gināns* that may be categorized under conversion, but that deal at length with moral instruction, ritual performances, eschatology and the *avatār* theory, as for instance, the Garbīs.

Such a wide range of topics, motifs and symbols permeate the *gināns* in the Anthology that it would be difficult to classify them along the thematic lines suggested by Asani. Except in the case of longer works such as the *Brahma Prakāśa* or the *Das Avatār*, which may be more focused on one theme, it appears that the shorter *gināns* do not necessarily have a focal theme. Rather, the latter appear to have a kind of interdependency, amplifying and completing one another. Thus, the more *gināns* one examines, the clearer the meaning of individual poems become. This interconnected network of poems creates the matrix of Satpanth religious ideas. A careful examination of how various themes in individual *gināns* relate to and define each other may thus

¹⁸ Ali. S. Asani, “Ginān,” *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, vol. 5 (New York: MacMillan, 1986) 561.



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help to yield a picture of the constituent elements of Satpanth Ismāʿilism, a subject that merits indepth textual analysis of key technical terms, motifs, symbols and their inter-relationships. While this analysis is beyond the scope of the present study, it offers a promising avenue for future research.

Given the difficulty of identifying specific *gināns* in the Anthology of Pīr Shams by single themes, a more practical method of classifying them is in terms of literary genre, in this case, narrative and non-narrative.¹⁹ The category of narrative includes *gināns* whose content is sacred tradition, (myth, legend or tale), parables, prophecy and politics. The non-narrative genre includes *gināns* with didactic, devotional, moral, prescriptive, and doctrinal themes. A further distinction can be made by observing that, in general, narrative *gināns* are preoccupied with the subject of victory over the enemy, alliance and conversion, and salvation through the savior (*avatār-imām*) of the True Path (*satpanth*). Non-narratives, on the other hand, focus on ethical injunctions, ritual duties and obligations, and the correct expressions of faith and devotion. It may be suggested that the narratives preserve the transformational strategies used in the history of Satpanth to win allies and converts, whereas the non-narratives preserve the religious forms and practices of Satpanth Ismāʿilism.

The category of narrative *gināns* in the Anthology has provided important clues for the historical thesis developed in this study. This category of *gināns* encompasses stories, traditions, and recollections which, when carefully examined, seem to be pregnant with allusions to the foundations and political context of Satpanth Ismāʿilism in Western India. Devoted mainly to the travels of Pīr Shams and his conflicts, miracles and conversions, the narratives allude to political tensions in forecasts of battles to be won

¹⁹ I owe this helpful suggestion to Prof. Robert Culley at McGill University, Montreal.



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by the distant Shāh, persecutions suffered by the Pīr's devotees, and victories over enemies (including a Hindu king and Šūfī saint).

The non-narrative category of *gināns*, on the other hand, reveal important information about Satpanth practices and beliefs. Under practices, we find in the Anthology of *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams references to the following topics: paying the tithe (*dasonḍ*); performing the *ghaṭ pāṭh* ceremony (installation of holy water); following the instructions of the *pīr*; service (*sevā*); charity (*sakhāvat*; *dāna*); meditation (*smaraṇa*, *dhyāna*); keeping vows (*vrata*); moral conduct (*dharma*), for instance, overcoming greed, lust, lassitude, and so forth. The subject of belief includes topics such as the True Guru (*satguru*); the Last Age (*kalyug*); the Day of Judgement (*mahādin*); the Tenth Avatār (*das avatār*); and release from the cycle of death and rebirth (*āvāgamaṇa*—lit. coming and going; *caurāsī ferā*—lit. eighty-four turns or revolutions).

A careful and systematic study of these topics and their connections would help show the rich and intricate network of religious ideas and practices found in Satpanth Ismāʿīlism. While it is true that the *avatār* theory is a central concept in Satpanth Ismāʿīlism, of equal importance and interest are other, less-explored elements in its complex system of religious, ritual and social connections that helped anchor the Satpanth Ismāʿīlīs as a faith and a community. A detailed analysis of the religious worldview and practices of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism as revealed in the *gināns* has yet to be undertaken and would offer promising insights into the religious fabric of this tradition.²⁰

²⁰ This will, I hope, constitute my future study of the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams.



NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION OF THE ANTHOLOGY

Over the course of history, translation styles have oscillated between the extremes of strict literalism and free expression. Renaissance Italian writers contended that translations were homely when faithful and unfaithful when lovely,¹ epitomizing a timeworn controversy over the merits of literal versus free translation. Proponents of strictly literal translation have been criticized for tolerating awkward, stiff and unintelligible renderings while supporters of the free style have been reproached for promoting translations which are excessively florid, exotic and unfaithful to the original. Commenting early this century on this division, T. F. Higham wrote incisively:

The one sect aims at transporting us back to the poetry of Greece, and the other at bringing Greek poetry closer to our own. The former aim is deserving of respect . . . On the other hand, it is evident that such translators are praised more often than read.²

This debate as to whether the letter or the spirit is more important in translation may be better understood in relation to the different purposes intended for a translation. The biblical scholar and linguist Eugene Nida insists that the principal purpose of a translation is to evoke from the present reader the same response that the message

¹ Eugene A. Nida, *Towards a Science of Translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 2.

² *Ibid.*, 25.



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elicited in its original context. Based on the principle of achieving equivalent effect, he recommends that the form of the translation be shaped by the semantics and gestalt of the target and not the source language. Nida calls this type of translation “dynamic equivalence:”

A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture; it does not insist that he understand the cultural patterns of the source-language context in order to comprehend the message.³

This orientation is in direct conflict with translations of “formal equivalence” whose principal aim is to permit the reader to comprehend as fully as possible the historical context of the original receptors. Translations guided by formal equivalence pay closer attention both to form and content, and attempt thoroughly to expose the structural, syntactic and idiomatic characteristics of the original. This orientation is preferred in academic scholarship where scholars must regularly consult authoritative translations of primary texts to pursue critical textual and historical analysis.

Unlike theological or literary translations, which are deliberately intended to evoke from the current reader a response parallel to that of the original recipient, scholarly translations of texts are meant to provide a sound and accurate basis upon which the thought and culture of a group represented in their primary sources may be examined in detail. Thus, whereas dynamic or free translations may entertain alterations and adjustments to the original in order to make its message more meaningful to current readers, such a liberty would not be permissible in formal equivalence where accuracy is judged on the basis of a translation's closeness or “fidelity” to the original.

³ Ibid.. 159.



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At the outset, it should be made clear that the purpose of the translations in this collection are intended neither for literary effect nor theological service. That is, these translations have not been crafted to evoke a response (literary, theological or any other kind) from the reader. The basic aim of the *gināns* attributed to Pīr Shams is didactic and theological. To attempt to evoke the same response that the works of Pīr Shams may have elicited from the original audience would require the translator to identify with and re-enact the author's mission. Such a goal does not fall within the scope of scholarly translations. Rather, the prime objective of the translations given here has been to achieve the closest formal equivalence to the original as possible, and thus to allow for critical and precise textual analysis.

Since textual analysis involves the systematic study of technical terms, consistent and exact translation is of great importance. Furthermore, to examine a work for what it may reveal about itself, its own context, and its own users, the least amount of intrusion of the translator's own interpretation of the text is desirable. Such intrusions, moreover, are more likely to occur when translations aim to have a literary or theological effect upon the modern reader. For, in the case of translations meant for literary and theological purposes, it is desirable to close the cultural gap between the receivers of the original text and current readers by eliminating unknown allusions and traces of foreign setting. Such an approach, however, would seriously hamper a reconstruction of the historical and cultural milieu of users of the original text. In order to examine the meaning of the message in its original context, the greater the retention of cultural, linguistic and idiomatic expressions of the original, the better. To paraphrase Higham, the purpose here is to take the reader back to the poetry of Pīr Shams, and not to bring his poetry closer to modern verse. It should be stressed, therefore, that the following translations fall under the category of formal-literal and not dynamic-free, and no attempt has been made to make the *gināns* of Pīr Shams "relevant" to a modern context.



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It is appropriate at this point to describe briefly the procedure followed while translating the *gināns* of Pīr Shams. Essentially, my translations were guided by the principle that any reader familiar with the language of the *gināns* should readily be able to trace the rendering back to its original. That is, the translations were to be firmly rooted in the wording of the original text and not in any general impression of their meaning.

The first stage of translations consisted of an inter-lineal translation of each *ginān* in this Anthology. That is, every verse was written out followed by a word by word identification in Gujarati and its meaning in English, and then by an English translation. Especially problematic at this stage of the translation was the identification of those word formations in the text of the *gināns* which were impossible to trace in standard Gujarati dictionaries. Some of these were recognised to be linguistic characteristics common to medieval Gujarati and Hindi literature, while others appeared to be linguistic peculiarities specific to the *gināns*.

In addition to a word for word identification, the *gināns* of Pīr Shams were also paraphrased into Gujarati, a procedure that proved to be extremely beneficial on several counts.⁴ Firstly, immersion in the idiom and style of the language helped bring to life the religious and cultural tone and nuances of the literature that were otherwise easily lost in the initial inter-lineal English translation. Secondly, and more specifically, since the syntax of the *gināns* was in many instances too vague to ascertain the exact subject, object or voice, paraphrasing *gināns* in Gujarati clarified these decisions. Paraphrasing *gināns* into modern Gujarati also made it possible to determine, in the case of archaism, idioms, and unfamiliar forms, the conventional Gujarati wording that would suit the context. For example, the first verse of Ginān 84 in the Anthology reads:

⁴ I owe this helpful advice to Prof. Bhupendra Trivedi, a specialist in medieval Gujarati and Hindi religious literature in Bombay, India, with whom I addressed the many idiosyncracies in the text of Pīr Shams.



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māñpe varase amarata nūra ke

The first word, *māñpe* can easily be misconstrued as *māñ* (mother) *pe* or *para* (on). In fact, however, it is more likely to be *māthun* (head) and if inflected, would read in modern Gujarati as *māthāpara* (on the head of). The word *amarata* is *amṛta* or ambrosia, although it may be confused for *amara* or *amratya* (immortal). Word for word, the line means: on head–falls–nectar–light–of/that. Paraphrased as a full sentence in modern Gujarati, it would read, *[tamārā] māthāpara [khudāī]-nūra [rūpī] amṛta varase [che]:* Divine Light, which is in the form of nectar, rains upon your head. In the case of this phrase, three questions were resolved through the Gujarati paraphrase: firstly, that the word *māñpe* is most likely the word *māthun* (head), which in the *ginān* has lost the syllable *tha*. Secondly, as is common with many other words in the *gināns*, the consonant cluster *mṛta* has been broken down to full syllables *marata*. And finally, that the verb *varasavun* (to fall, to rain) is to be construed in the present tense *varase che*, it is raining, and not as *varase ke*, in which case, it would indicate a conditional: if it rains.

These word for word inter-lineal translations as well as the literal English translations based on the Gujarati paraphrases represented the first stage of work. While the vocabulary of my translations was English, their syntax and grammatical structures closely imitated those of the Gujarati text. The primary purpose was to determine, as far as possible, the exact meaning of each word, to take note of forms that could not be identified, and to become versed in the style and syntax of the *gināns*.

The next stage involved the identification of terms and passages whose meanings remained obscure. These terms fell into three categories: ones that belonged to other regional lexicons such as Punjabi, Sindhi and Multānī; ones which appeared to be specific to a Satpanth Ismāʿīlī lexicon; and ones whose morphology remained obscure and difficult to reconstruct. Also included among these were familiar Gujarati or Hindi terms that, however, had meanings and usages not shared by the larger linguistic



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region. A fitting example is the very word *ginān*, which is derived from the Skt. *jñāna* (knowledge). In Satpanthī Ismā'īlī usage, it is also synonymous with the word *bhajan*. That is, not only does *ginān* refer to sacred teaching or knowledge, but it also refers to a literary form, a religious or devotional song that is full of wisdom—hence, *ginān*.⁵

To gain further insight into these specific usages and other obscure words, particularly those that were peculiar to the Satpanthī Ismā'īlīs, interviews were conducted with various Wā'izīn, traditional preachers and religious specialists in the community both in India and Canada. Some of these traditional specialists have had professional language training, but many depend on long years of oral teachings and familiarity with the dialects of the *ginān* for their knowledge of its language and idiom. It is not uncommon for religious preachers in the subcontinent to be bilingual or even trilingual—most can comfortably give sermons in Gujarati, Kutchi, Punjabi, Hindi or Urdu, and even English. Unfortunately, on the level of linguistic analysis, these discussions did not always yield results; however, they were instructive on the significance of the *ginān* tradition to the Satpanthī Ismā'īlīs.⁶

At the end of the second stage, the translations of the entire collection of the 106 *gināns* of Pīr Shams were revised. In working with the collection as a whole, the meaning of several terms or phrases that had been obscure in some poems became clarified through other poems where their significance was evident from the context. Thus, by

⁵ It is interesting to note that when I left the word *ginān* in my Gujarātī paraphrase of such a line as “and Pīr Shams sang sweet *gināns*,” Prof. Trivedi replaced the word *ginān* with *bhajan*. This confirms that while the word has the extended meaning of hymn to the insider, Trivedi's use of the word *ginān* was restricted to its primary Sanskrit meaning of knowledge or wisdom.

⁶ The traditional specialists were often unable to shed light on obscure terms or corruptions. They more readily entered a philosophical discussion on the “essence” of a verse or *ginān* as a whole. This is understandable since as preachers, their interest in *gināns* was theological and devotional. For homiletic purposes, they were interested in *gināns* as proof texts for their sermons.



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reviewing the translations several times as a whole, previously ambiguous verses became more intelligible as one *ginān* helped elucidate another. In his translation of the Mathnawī, Reynold Nicholson says in his introduction:

When our author gives no sign whether he is speaking in his own person or by the voice of one of his innumerable puppets—celestial, infernal, human or animal—who talk just like himself; when he mingles his comments with their discourse and glides imperceptibly from the narrative into the exposition; when he leaves us in doubt as to whom he is addressing or what he is describing—the translator is driven to conjecture, and on occasion must leap in the dark.⁷

A similar problem obtains in the *gināns*, but during this stage of revision and rereading, conversations began to take definite shape, places where pauses would be most appropriate became evident, and natural breaks in otherwise seemingly continuous lines of poetry surfaced.

The initial and middle stages of translation were focused exclusively on the original text: whether or not the translation was accurate, which verses remained difficult and obscure, what were the problems of syntax and so forth. The final stage of translation, however, was preoccupied with a different set of concerns. By this stage, it was possible to identify those terms that appeared to play a technical role in the collection as a whole. In order to conduct critical textual analysis, it was vital to ensure that such technical terms were translated consistently and in a systematic manner. Therefore, at this stage, the translations were carefully checked for consistency in their rendering of technical terms (which have been retained in parenthesis in the translations) and to confirm that the weight these terms held in the original was preserved. For instance, four words are frequently used in this collection of *gināns* to denote heaven: *vaikuṇṭha*, *svarga*, *amarāpūri* and *bahīṣṭa*. If one wished systematically to examine the

⁷ Reynold A. Nicholson, ed. & trans., *The Mathnawī of Jalālū'ddin Rūmī* (London: Luzac & Co., 1977), xvi.



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nuances of each in the Anthology, it would be ineffective to translate them arbitrarily as heaven or paradise. Thus, *vaikuṇṭha* and *svarga* have been consistently translated as Heaven, *bahiṣṭa* as Paradise, and *amarāpūri* as City of Immortality.

Another concern at this stage that was deliberately ignored in the previous stages involved polishing the language of the poems. The translations were read independently of the Gujarati text and sparingly revised so that the grammar, style and choice of vocabulary was in tune with English expression. Excessively stiff and awkward literal translations were refined, repetitious phrases which suited the original but were redundant in translation were reduced, and other grammatical and stylistic problems were addressed. Literary flourishes were avoided and any touches that were added were kept to a bare minimum.

Finally, decisions had to be made on form of presentation: whether or not technical terms, place names, character names be retained as they appeared in the *gināns* or in their Gujarati, Sanskrit or Perso-Arabic forms; whether or not annotations should appear at the foot of the poems or separately; and whether to document linguistic problems. In the case of technical terms and names, retaining the forms found in the *gināns* would have been confusing because, as mentioned previously, the language of the *gināns* is polyglottic and its vocabulary often contains corruptions or variations. Thus, there is considerable inconsistency in spelling in that one word may be occur with different spellings. For instance, the term for deed or act, *kriyā* appears variously as *kiriya*, *kriyā*, and *kiryā*. Similarly, the name of Pīr Shams appears as *śamaśa*, *śamsa*, or *śamasa*.

Thus, rather than citing technical terms with the spellings that appear in the Gujarati edition of the Anthology, they have been shown in modern standard Gujarati forms as given in Pandurang G. Deshpande's *Gujarati-English Dictionary* or L. R. Gala's



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Viśāl Śabdakoś.⁸ Terms in the *gināns* that do not appear in this dictionary are considered loan-words and transliterated in their proper Hindi, Punjabi, Persian or Arabic forms as these appear in the standard dictionaries of these respective languages.⁹ It should further be noted that there are many Arabic and Persian words that have become part of the Gujarati and Hindi lexicon, for example, *kāfar* (infidel), *mahobat* (love), *bahīsta* (paradise) and so on. These terms will be cited in their Gujarati form and not in their original Persian or Arabic form, with some exceptions, for instance, words such as *‘ishq* (love) and *qāḍi* (judge).

The following rules have been observed for names. All names of Hindu mythological figures are given in their Sanskrit form in the text of the translations so that they may easily be recognised by scholars familiar with the Indian tradition. The variants of these names in the *gināns* are indicated in the annotations. Names of figures who have been historically identified are given in their conventional spelling: Arabic or Persian for Muslim names, Sanskrit, Hindi or Gujarati for Indian names. Names of characters who are local to a region and whose identity is known only through their action and description in the *gināns* are given as they appear in the *ginān* text.

Annotations of terms and names have been given separately in an Appendix rather than at the foot of each translation to avoid needless repetition as well as to facilitate quicker reference. The annotations of character names fall into three groups: mythological,

8 Deshapande, Pandurang, *Gujarati-English Dictionary* (Ahmedabad: University Book Production Board, 1978); L. R. Gala, *Viśāl Śabdakoś: Gujarātī-Gujarātī-Angreṇī Koś* (Ahmedabad: Gala Publishers, n.d.).

9 For these languages, the following dictionaries were consulted: Brij Mohan & Badrinath Kapoor, eds., *Meenakshi Hindi-English Dictionary* (New Delhi: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1980); Maya Singh, compiler, *The Punjabi Dictionary* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1st ed. 1895; repr. 1983); F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (New Delhi: Oriental Books, 1973); J. M. Cowan, ed. *Arabic-English Dictionary* (New York: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1976 3rd ed.).



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historical and local. Mythological names include descriptions of those characters who appear in Hindu mythology; historical names describe those individuals who are known to have existed and concerning whom some historical record is available; and finally, local names constitute figures who play a role in the *ginān* narratives but about whom we have no external evidence or historical information. Frequently occurring epithets have also been annotated. All personal names, titles and epithets are capitalized. A map indicating the location of identifiable place names has been included in the front matter.

Finally, a few points should be made about the format of the translations. A technical term that appears several times in the same *ginān* is given in parenthesis and italics only in its first appearance. However, it is consistently translated by the same English word every time it reappears in the poem. The notes at the foot of the poems are reserved for clarification of an idiom or unusual phrase in the translation, and for indicating alternative translations and obscure words or verses. The order of the translations and the numeration of verses at the right of the translations correspond to the Gujarati printed edition of the *gināns* of Pīr Shams entitled, **Mahān Ismāīlī Saṅta Pīr Shams Racīt Ginānono Saṅgraha**. An attempt has been made to keep the translations gender-inclusive.¹⁰ Thus, a singular may be changed to a plural to avoid use of the pronoun “he” as a generic category. Names or nouns following the vocative “O” have been capitalized.

¹⁰ This is appropriate to the context since in Satpanth Ismāīlism, both men and women are devotees and eligible for salvation.



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TRANSLATIONS

Mahān Ismāīlī Saṁta Pīr Shams Racīt Gīnānono Saṁgraha
An Anthology of Gīnāns composed by the Great Ismāīlī Saint, Pīr Shams

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1

O Trader! The five ¹ are in pursuit of you! So take along provisions of truth (<i>sat</i>).	1
O Trader! Gain plentiful profit in this world! For up ahead the Swāmī Rājā will take stock.	2
O Trader! This chest of a skeleton is full of tuel! Five bullocks keep stuffing it with wood.	3
O Trader! Take with you then a pot of water! For up ahead no one will fetch you any.	4
O Trader! Carry with you a basket of rations! For yonder there is neither store nor merchant.	5
O Trader! [Here] family and friends have fed you! But up ahead there are no kith nor kin.	6
O Trader! She too is a traitor, the wife in your house! Seeing you off [to the grave] she will herself return. ²	7
O Trader! Pir Shams, the famous, has spoken this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>)! Take along with you the provisions of truth.	8

¹ Possibly an allusion to the five evils of desire (*kāma*), anger (*krodha*), greed (*moha*), lust (*mada*), and delusion (*māyā*).

² That is, his wife does not accompany him on his journey beyond death.



2

Two brothers Candrabhāṇ and Surbhāṇ were the disciples (*celā*) of Pīr Shams;
From a common ancestor, they are the Devotees (*bhagat*) of the present age (*kalyug*).

In the city of Delhi,¹ Sāheb the King (*rājā*) will capture the fort and rule;
When the Sāheb arrives, the wicked will flee and he will let the pious rule. 1

The Shāh will come to Multān in Jambudvīpa² with the five Pāṇḍavas;
Attacking the wicked, the Sāheb will expel them and the Shāh himself will rule. 2

The good and the wicked began to argue and the wicked feared in their hearts:
“This Shāh will rid the earth of us and grant dominion to the pious(*rīkhīsar*)!”³ 3

Pīr Shams, the Satgur said, “O Believers (*muʾmin*), be vigilant!
Three ages have passed away and now is the turn of the fourth (*kalyug*). 4

1 dilādī: may be *dil* (heart) or *Dilli/Dilhi* (Delhi).

2 Jampudīpa: The Indian peninsula, lit. the land surrounded by water.

3 rīkhīyā: der. Skt. *ṛṣi* – seer, holy man; pious, righteous, good; also occurs as rīkhīsar.



O Brother! Be prosperous (*suphala*) my brother!
O Brother! Be affectionate towards each other.
O Brother! Such affection is dear to the Sāheb.
O Brother! Such affection is dear to other brothers.
Indeed, be wise in your dealings!

O Brother! Purchase the pearl of Immortality (*a.mṛta*)!
The man who awakens, he alone will procure it.

1

O Brother! Select the pearl of the Guru,
Lest without the Guru, you go astray.

2

O Brother! He whose mind lusts for the other woman,
That creature is devoid of honorable deed.

3

O Brother! Who comes not into my Sāheb's temple,
That person will turn into a ghost or spirit.

4

Pir Shams, the Generous (*dātār*), pleads:

"O Swāmī, release me from the cycle of rebirth (*āvāgamaṇa*).¹

5

¹ āvāgamaṇa: lit. coming and going.



4

Rouse yourselves in the service (<i>sevā</i>) of the Shāh! He, the one who made a promise (<i>kol</i>), has come.	1
Naklañkī, the bearer [of Light], has become manifest! He, the Shāh, rides on the mount Duldul.	2
As pledged, the Shāh will bring justice (<i>adal</i>): His hands will sieze that three-edged sword. ¹	3
The Shāh will twirl it in all four directions, And he will attack the rogues and the infidels(<i>kāfar</i>)!	4
Counting them infidels, he will strike down corrupt judges (<i>qāḍi</i>)! In Allah's [court], Muḥammed is the chief minister (<i>vazīr</i>).	5
The ranks of Khān nor Malik ² exist up there; Paupers and kings stand on equal ground.	6
Dispel your heedlessness and awaken! All who slumber are condemned to rebirth (<i>saṃsār</i>).	7
For our Sāheb is all our fervour and zeal! So said Pīr Shams, the Generous (<i>dātār</i>).	8

1 khaḍaṅga tradhāriyā: Guj. *traṇa* (three) *dhāraṇī* (edged) *khaḍaṅga* (sword). An allusion to Alī's sword, *Ḍhulfikār*; may also allude to Śiva's *triśūla* (trident).

2 That is, the aristocrats, royalty.



5

- O Brother! Come here and speak amicably!
Friend! Walk humbly and be patient!
Never forsake the love of True Religion (*sat dharma*). 1
- O Brother! That bile of hatred within you;
Friend! Get rid of that bitter fluid!
Thus will Sāheb's heart be highly pleased and much endeared. 2
- O Brother! This body (*kāyā*), so raw and imperfect!
Friend! Be not proud of it!
Today or tomorrow, surely its form will go limp. 3
- O Brother! This flesh which is but clay;
Friend! It will get mixed into the earth!
The body will turn sallow as the rusty-hued *kumkum*.¹ 4
- O Brother! The soul (*jīv*) is spiritual,²
But alas it is fond of its body!
Lotus-like, the attachment lasts but two days. 5
- O Brother! True believers (*mu'min*) are they,
Friend, who have their selves under firm control!
How then, O Brothers, can anyone else constrain you? 6
- O Brother! True believers are they,
Friend, who mend their own faults!
Their souls will surely go to heaven (*svarga*). 7
- O Brother! Auspicious are followers of the True Path (*satpanth*) !
Friend! Whoever unveils their curtain [of secrecy],
That soul will surely go to hell (*narak*). 8
- O Brother! Those who make pious offerings (*prasād*),
Pīr Shams said: Friend!
How could their souls have any desire for the body? 9

1 Saffron or red powder typically used to mark the forehead with a circular dot.
2 आसि: of the heavens/ether, celestial, ethereal, spiritual.



6

The heart of the Guru, yes his heart is filled with religion ¹ (<i>dharma</i>).	
In the True Faith (<i>din</i>), indeed in the True Faith, he was born.	2
Fair-complexioned, yes well-disposed, the Guru held a cup before his face.	
He placed his hand, indeed he laid his hand on top of my head.	4
Then the Sāheb placed the tithe (<i>dasond</i>), yes the tithe on the head.	
Give it to the Sāheb, indeed give! For the servant who gives not falls into greed.	6
If [the tithe] is incorrect, yes if it falls short, the mind will become defective.	
Afterward do not wring your hands, indeed do not get torn with remorse.	8
Make ten portions, yes divide [your earning] into ten equal measures of weight.	
Dare not be negligent, indeed delinquent! Be wary, be conscientious.	10
Else it will turn into a heavy burden, yes a terrible affliction upon you.	
Your life, indeed the whole of it will be worthless, it will be wasted.	12
The soul (<i>jīv</i>) scorched and your body crushed, you will repent, yes bemoan.	
Pir Shams said: If you want release, know your religion(<i>dharma</i>) , yes realize it!	14

¹ In the original, the second phrase of all the verses is repeated.



7

- O Sāheb! Be compassionate! My Master! Bestow mercy!
Brothers! Say not to one another, "Mine, all this is mine". 1
- Keep your minds so stainless that He
Who created us, O Brother, will raise us. 2
- Blessed that moment when Sāheb showers Light upon Light (*nūr*) !
When the nectar cup of Immortality (*amṛta*) is filled to the brim. 3
- O Brothers! The earth asks the sky,
"Those two sages who just went by, who were they?" 4
- [The sky replied:] "They have been blessed by a vision (*dīdār*) of my Shāh;
Indeed, Brother! Those two sages have left for Heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*)." 5
- Said Pīr Shams: The heart of the Shāh is an ocean.
O Shāh! Benign King (*rājā*) of great and small, have mercy upon the world! 6



Waken day and night to perform meritorious deeds (<i>kriyā</i>)! Then play to your heart's content. O Brother, so be it. (refrain)	1
With unbending trust, take refuge (<i>śaraṇa</i>) in the Shāh; Traversing the three paths, he has given blessings. O Brother, so be it.	2
Thirty-three crore ¹ gods (<i>sur</i>) enjoyed that lasting pleasure; Then man (<i>puruṣa</i>) was created. O Brother, so be it.	3
The gods contemplated upon Gurunātha; ² And behold! This world was born. O Brother, so be it.	4
He [the Lord] struck down Śaṅkhāsura and rescued the Vedas; As Matsya, he took birth in the waters. O Brother, so be it.	5
The foolish demons Maḍhu, Kaiṭabha and Mura; They made him furious and were utterly destroyed. O Brother, so be it.	6
The man Narasiṃha was the Supreme Swāmī; He slaughtered the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. O Brother, so be it.	7
King Bali was so vain and foolish in his action; He had to bear Viṣṇu's feet upon his head. O Brother, so be it.	8
Facing King Sahasrārjuna, [Rāvaṇa] did not recognise his might; Over-confident, he was easily destroyed. O Brother, so be it.	9
Not recognising the man was Swāmī, the Lord Nārāyaṇa; He foolishly let his feet into the cage. O Brother, so be it.	10
Lord Rāma, Swāmī, the Bow-Wielder; He dwells in many places around the world. ³ O Brother, so be it.	11
The ten-faced demon Daśāsana roared in vainglory; He transformed himself into a golden-hued deer. O Brother, so be it.	12
To rescue Sītā, the Shāh raided Laṅkā; He gave Mandodari the following boon. O Brother, so be it.	13
Mandodari got for a husband, Prince Vibhiṣaṇa and his mansion; To him was given the castle of Laṅkā. O Brother, so be it.	14
Rāvaṇa suffered destruction [at the hands of] Swāmī Uparājana; The blessed Nirguṇa took his form. O Brother, so be it.	15

1 1 crore is the equivalent of ten million.

2 nātha: Master, Lord, Beloved

3 nava khaṇḍa: lit. nine sections, continents.



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The Infant-Lord was surrounded by a hundred and sixty damsels (<i>gopīs</i>); He was Kṛṣṇa, ferocious Lord of three worlds. O Brother, so be it.	16
Keśava destroyed Cāṇūra, [accomplice of King] Kaṁsa; He spun him around with the snake Vāsuki. O Brother, so be it.	17
Nārāyaṇa assumed the form of Buddha, When the turn came for the second age (<i>yuga</i>). O Brother, so be it.	18
The saint-seer Nārada invoked the name of Viṣṇu ; Duryodhana was then summoned. O Brother, so be it.	19
The war-drums were beaten and the bugles were blown; Prince Duryodhana had arrived. O Brother, so be it.	20
Wearing his bow, Arjuna sat in his chariot; Duryodhana had brought (his too). O Brother, so be it.	21
Wielder of the mace Bhīma thundered across the sky; His menacing threats froze the army. O Brother, so be it.	22
Dhamalā, on whose head rested the earth, trembled; Nakula endured great suffering. O Brother, so be it.	23
Arjuna and Karna met, enemy facing enemy; Whereupon night cloaked the sun. O Brother, so be it.	24
The Kauravas were beaten and the Pāṇḍavas victorious; For the Swāmī had sent an army. O Brother, so be it.	25
The Kauravas were beaten and the Pāṇḍavas victorious; That deed was recorded forever. O Brother, so be it.	26
The five, they were the Pāṇḍavas, the sixth was Nārāyaṇa; From their midst came the great faith (<i>dīn</i>). O Brother, so be it.	27
The Kauravas were beaten and the righteous (<i>rīkhīsar</i>) attained success; Along with Arjuna , countless were honored. O Brother, so be it.	28
At Cīnab, yes at Cīnab, you can hear the tenth demon; Surjā's husband did not return. O Brother, so be it.	29
A man prostrated at the feet of Nizār with an offering (<i>prasād</i>); He praised the name of Śrī Islām Shāh. O Brother, so be it.	30
So said Pīr Shams who came to the Shāh to seek refuge (<i>śaraṇa</i>); He praised the name of Śrī Islām Shāh before the Shāh.	31



In the city of love was King Manaśudha; ¹	
In his palace was Queen Radīyā. ²	1
The King and the Queen relaxed in their palace;	
While five ministers governed the kingdom.	2
Then once, O Brother, a summons (<i>hukam</i>) came from the Guru;	
Now how could they leave it unheeded?	3
The summons had come for only two persons;	
How possibly could they take a third along?	4
So the chaste (<i>sati</i>) Queen put her child into a cradle to sleep ;	
Then the two proceeded towards the Lord's (<i>deva</i>) portal.	5
When the King reached halfway,	
He came upon a deer suckling her fawn.	6
On seeing the babe, [the Queen's] breasts swelled with milk; ³	
So pained was she by her longing for her child that she died.	7
O Brother, a summons had come from the Guru;	
Now how could it be left unheeded?	8
A summons had come for two;	
How could he, the King go there all alone?	9
So [the King] bundled her up in a sheet and tied a knot:	
He lifted her and proceeded towards the Lord's presence.	10
Soon enough golden lights glittered ahead of him;	
In their midst was seated Śyāma, Master of the three worlds (<i>tribhovar</i>).	11
"Rise Queen Radīyā and drink this divine nectar of Immortality(<i>amṛta</i>) ! ⁴	
Lift your child onto your lap and nurse it!" [said the Lord].	12
Pīr Shams, the Defender (<i>ghāzī</i>), said:	
Listen carefully, O you gathered ones(<i>gat jamā'at</i>)!	13

1 lit. one of pure mind.

2 Possible connection to Queen Raḍiyya who ruled Delhi in the 12th century?

3 Guj. *pāno caḍhavuṇi* – when the mother's breasts fill with milk and she has a desire to feed her young; to feel affection for a lost child. There is a folk belief that if a mother's milk is left in the breast, it turns into poison and kills her.

4 This term often appears as *amī* or *amījala*, lit. water of Immortality.



- The Sāheb has sent Surbhān
To go visit Queen Surjā.
“In the demon’s home is a lady,” he said.
“She is my Devotee (*dāsi*).” 1
- Surbhān spoke these words to her.
“Listen, O Queen Surjā!
The Guru out of his love for you,
Has sent [me here] to this demon’s (*daitya*) land.” 2
- Upon hearing this, Queen Surjā stood up
And she came out of her retreat;
Letting go her *cheḍo*,¹ she prostrated at the Guru’s feet .
“Indeed, Swāmī has done us a favour!” 3
- [Surbhān] related to her the Guru’s wisdom (*ginān*)
And they meditated on its teaching (*veda*).
“We will impart to you the principles of religion (*dharma*),
But lady, you are mistress in a demon’s house!” 4
- Thereupon Queen Surjādevī said this:
“Standing on my feet, I, the Queen, plead!
O Swāmī, have mercy upon us!
Carry us safely across to the other shore (*pahele pār*).” 5
- “If you [promise to] recollect Shāh Pīr”, [replied Surbhān]
We will assure you and give you our word of honor (*kol*);
But Queen Surjādevī, surely if you remain righteous (*sat*),
You will attain the other shore.” 6
- Saying this much, he made ready to leave.
But standing up, the Queen begged:
“O Swāmī! Please return to us and grace our home
Once more by your presence.” 7
- Then Kamalā and Dhamalā appeared;
They too prostrated at his feet.
Ajīyā and Vajīyā also emerged,
And then came brother Robaḍa. 8
- Then Kamalā’s son came out;
He too paid his respects.
They all stood with hands clasped
Whereupon Locanā too arrived. 9

¹ The border of the *sari* or delicate cloth typically draped around Indian women. The border is often worn as a scarf to cover the head as a sign of modesty or respect.



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- [They said:] “O Swāmī! Please visit our home again
And impart to us the sacred knowledge (*veda*)!
O Swāmī, have mercy upon us!
And ferry us across to the other shore.” 10
- He gave assurance to the pious servants (*sevak*),
And then the respected Kamalā spoke:
“O Swāmī, have mercy upon us!
Deliver us to the other shore!” 11
- Then Vimras spoke these words
Concerning the Guru’s wisdom (*ginān*):
“If you remember Shāh Pīr,
You will attain the supreme boon of Heaven (*vaikunṭha*).” 12
- “You will attain the supreme boon of Heaven,
You will enter that glorious City of Immortality (*amarāpurī*).”
Surbhāṇ read aloud from the scriptures (*śāstra*)
That Pīr Shams had made the [following] promise (*kol*). 13
- “Pīr Shams and Śrī Islām Shāh,
They too will come to the fort in Multān.
Whoever will bring to them the exact tithe (*dasonḍ*),
Will attain the station of the City of Immortality. 14
- If you enter the City of Immortality and then too
By the very path shown to you by the Guru,
As a result of your success, boons will be given
To seven and a half crore others. 15
- These seven and a half crore will be chosen
From among the citizens of Cīnab town.
So keep in your hearts the wisdom (*ginān*) of the Guru
And do service (*sevā*) at the feet of Pīr Shams.” 16



My Creator(<i>khalīq</i>) built a wondrous city; In the city, he established the Name (<i>nām</i>), O Sir! ¹	1
Spontaneously the Sāheb brought forth salt and water; Similarly, he created grain, O Sir!	2
A rampart whose foundation measured seventy yards; ² Such a fortress did he construct, O Sir!	3
When man and woman united face to face, All waters were sanctified, O Sir!	4
When the woman gave birth to a son, She did not inform the step-mother, O Sir! ³	5
When the son grew old enough to wear a coat, He followed the commands (<i>firmān</i>) of faith (<i>dīn</i>), O Sir!	6
Whenever his coat became soiled, He washed the coat in fire, O Sir!	7
At every courtyard were two springs; Know they were fresh and sparkling, O Sir!	8
Each received two loaves of bread and one chicken; And water sweet as sugar, O Sir!	9
A canister would descend from the Lord (<i>ḥaḍrat</i>); One ate to one's heart's content, O Sir!	10
Pir Shams beholds the lamp plainly; The Light (<i>nūr</i>) glows like the moon, O Sir!	11
Water-laden clouds go there and descend, Where there are mountains and fields, O Sir!	12
Snakes nor scorpions can be found up there; Nor tigers nor any lions, O Sir!	13
There are no dumb nor deaf up there; Nor are there any lame or crippled, O Sir!	14
Behind each home are two bountiful gardens; One eats the fruits of one's heart's desire, O Sir!	15

1 *ejī*: this vocative usually appears at the beginning of the verse in most *gināns*; here it appears both at the beginning and end of the verse.
2 *gajā*: Guj. measure of length equal roughly to a yard.
3 Perhaps this refers to the other wife (or wives) of the husband.



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When the Creator sent forth the Prophet (<i>nabī</i>) ¹ of Light (<i>nūr</i>), The people (<i>ummat</i>) did not believe him, O Sir!	16
They did not believe the Pīr nor did they recognise the Shāh; No, they stuck stubbornly to their old positions, O Sir!	17
But they reaped what they had sown: Their city caused its own destruction, O Sir!	18
The soul (<i>jīv</i>) which rejects this religious knowledge (<i>ilm</i>), Will get drowned in wickedness, O Sir!	19
The Shāh has sent us a message (<i>firmān</i>); He has captured the fort and razed it to the ground, O Sir!	20
In our town those alone will we accommodate Who believe in my Sāheb, O Sir!	21
Whoever is sheltered by the Sāheb, How can such a devout servant (<i>bando</i>) drown, O Sir!	22
But of the wicked, their integrity And their trust are lost, O Sir!	23
Pīr Shams said the lamp would be cloaked; They would be left in profound darkness, O Sir!	24
The Prophet of Light (<i>nūr</i>) ascended the mountain; Water rose above the temple, O Sir!	25
Pīr Shams, the Guru, has related this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>); O Believers, (<i>mu'min</i>) recite and dwell upon it, O Sir!	26

¹ jābī: typographical error; should be nabī.
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You are my Swāmī, O Just (<i>qā'im</i>) and Eternal (<i>dā'im</i>) [Lord!] But only a few, yes only a few, know your Name (<i>nām</i>).	1
Indeed the promise (<i>kol</i>) of the trustworthy one is certain; The true servant (<i>bando</i>) was Muḥammed himself, yes Muḥammed himself.	2
A sincere servant does not estimate the Pīr, But follows humbly, yes follows humbly, the sayings of the Guru.	3
Keeping company of the pious (<i>sādhū</i>), the servant becomes pure; Whereas the heedless (<i>gāfal</i>) sits there weeping, yes weeping.	4
Life is but a hundred odd years long; O Devotee! Finally death too comes, yes it comes.	5
Pīr Shams, the ocean-hearted and moon-like, said: What the Creator (<i>kirtār</i>) intends, that occurs, yes it occurs.	6



Make the pilgrimage(<i>ūrtha</i>)! Pīr Shams, the defender (<i>ghāzī</i>) has gone; O Brother, go [to the sacred waters] to bathe, to bathe, to bathe!	1
Washed and bathed, those souls who follow the Guru's orders (<i>fīrmān</i>) They will bathe nowhere else, no they will bathe nowhere else!	2
Walk on the straight path (<i>rāh</i>), ask the Pīr [for it] and then walk on that path; Do not let your feet stray upon barren land, no do not stray!	3
Pīr Shams gives the best instruction for all souls; ¹ Even hard-hearted souls can he convince, yes he can convince.	4
My Sāheb has graciously opened a door—it is like a Needle's eye through which the elephant-self ² must pass.	5
Pīr Shams, the defender [of the faith], said: True friends and believers (<i>mu'min</i>) will reap the fruits!	6

¹ arvāh: Ar. bkn. pl. of *ruh* – soul, spirit, breath.

² hasatī: Urd. *hastī* – elephant; one's being, individuality, personality, self. Based on a proverb that says the ego is as huge as an elephant, and it must be shrunk (humbled) to pass through the needle's eye.



- O Soul (*jīva*)! Cast off your attraction for this world (*saṃsār*)!
If you worship the Primordia! (*ādi*) Brahman, your efforts will triumph. 1
- Primordial Brahman has come in the form (*avatār*) of Pīr Shams.
If you recognise him, you will attain the other shore. 2
- Hari came to the province of Daylamān and then stayed in Multān;
Vimras, Hari's devotee recited *gīnāns* in honor of the Guru. 3
- Then Shāh Shams arrived and travelled in the dress of a *faqīr*;
Taking along two youths, he came to the province of Ghazni. 4
- He reached Emnābāi's house and approached a water-well;
Chaste Emnābāi prostrated at Guru Shams' feet and begged for protection. 5
- "How fortunate you have come Gurujī! Great indeed is my fortune!
O Swāmī, please enter my house today and thus fulfil my heart's desire." 6
- He accompanied the chaste woman (*satī*) and entered her quarters;
For showing his devotee (*dāsī*) this kindness, she bowed down again. 7
- "O Hari, please agree to dine at my house at least this once.
Be kind and stay, O Swāmī, deliver me to the other shore (*pahele pār*)!" 8
- Chandrabhān reflected a moment and then said to the lady:
"You, O Lady, are chaste; you have a mission to perform for the people." 9
- Emnābāi replied: "O Swāmī, I am under your protection (*śaraṇa*).
You are the child of Brahma! I prostrate at your feet." 10
- Surbhān then said to the chaste woman, "Your name is Emnābāi.
Guru Shams has accepted your invitation and you are a true devotee." 11
- "Go fetch an unbaked pot from the potter and then fill it with water!
If you do this before preparing dinner, then will Pīr Shams dine." 12
- The chaste Emnābāi left and returned with an unbaked pot full of water;
Very pleased, her three guests, Pīr Shams and the two youths then ate. 13
- Her sister-in-law Nānābāi said: "Sister! What are you doing!
Who are these guests you have just fed? Where do they live?" 14
- "They are staying in the town Godī Viloḍā with my father.
He is my Guru, O Sister, and I am his devotee." 15
- Nānābāi replied: "But they are dressed in Muslim clothing!
Our house has been defiled! O Sister, what remains of your customs?"¹ 16

¹ lit. what remains of your country (*deś*).



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Chaste Emnābāī kneeled down and pleaded: "O Sister, I have a diamond. I will give you the diamond but please do not tell father-in-law."	17
"Keep your diamond to yourself! Now I know your whole secret! I will surely inform my mother. Why should I spare you from misery?"	18
Lovely Hemābāī smiled at her husband, Master Śāmdās. "That girl left her parents home and came to ours!" ¹ ...	19
...the daughter told her father. "What is the matter?" asked the mother. "Call everyone together! Daughter-in-law has defiled our house."	20
Sneering, Hemābāī said spitefully to her husband: "We can do without daughter-in-law. Send her back to her father's place!"	21
Soon, everybody in the city was gossiping and poking fun at Emnābāī; But the chaste lady's (<i>satī</i>) deeds were noble and she attained the other shore.	22
Candrabhāṇ said: "O my Sāheb, have mercy upon her!" Guru Shams was merciful and sent her to her home in Heaven (<i>vaikuṇṭha</i>).	23
A carrier descended from Heaven and she boarded the craft; The chaste lady had served Pīr Shams and was delivered to the other shore.	24
Vimras uttered these words: "Listen together carefully, all of you! Whoever serves Guru Shams will also be borne to Heaven."	25

¹ Thus, she must submit to the rules of her in-laws' household.



Conversation between Queen Surjā and the Parrot

- Queen Surjā said: “Tell me about the two travellers (*musāfar*).
O Swāmī, how will they come to us and what is their caste (*jāt*)?” 1
- In the form of a parrot, Pīr Shams replied: “O Queen, both of them live with me.
They will come reciting the *gināns* of the Guru; their caste is worshipper.”¹ 2
- Queen Surjā asked: “What kind of dwelling do they inhabit?
Tell us something about them, these two disciples (*dāsa*) of yours.” 3
- Pīr Shams in his parrot form said: “Listen, O Queen, I will disclose all!
First let me teach you about the *avatār*; get your group together and sit!” 4
- Queen Surjā said: “Our gathering is composed of eight souls (*jīv*).
All of them will attend; please inform them about everything.” 5
- Pīr Shams in his parrot form said: “Listen, O Queen, to all the Names (*nām*)!
Once, when there was neither earth nor sky, we all lived together.” 6
- Queen Surjā asked: “What is the secret to that place, O Swāmī?
Reveal to us some sign (*niśan*), some name by which to realise it.” 7
- Pīr Shams in his parrot form said: “Long ago there was a barren land;
But in the waters where the Master (*nāth*) slept, we enjoyed great happiness.” 8
- Queen Surjā asked: “O Swāmī, how many days did he sleep?
From there, where did you go, O Guru, you who are a wealth of blessings?” 9
- Pīr Shams in his parrot form replied: “Thereafter, we lived upon land.
They² recognised who we were and so we went and stayed at their place.” 10
- Queen Surjā said: “O Swāmī, you have lived both in water and on land!
Reveal to us the method by which your disciples recognised you?” 11
- Pīr Shams in his parrot form said: “I took birth in my mother’s home.
Thus did I assume human form (*avatār*). Then I was met by my two disciples.” 12
- Queen Surjā asked: “When will they come to us?
Will they come to show us [the path], O Swāmī, they who are your disciples?” 13
- Pīr Shams in his parrot form replied: “Queen Surjā, hear this wisdom (*ginān*)!
The names of the two travellers who will come are Vimras and Surbhāṇ.” 14

1 dāsapanā: lit. having the quality of a *dāsa* or “devotee-hood.” In translation, while *dāsa* and *dāsi* both mean devotee, when *dāsa* refers to the two male devotees who accompanied Pīr Shams during his travels, it is consistently translated as “disciple.”

2 His two disciples or followers. See next verse.



- O Brother! In your heart is God (*antaryāmi*), in your heart is the Master (*swāmi*);
But within this world (*duniyā*), there is nothing at all! 1
- O Brother! Indeed the sky extends well beyond your reach;
In its midst burns the thousand-rayed sun. 2
- O Brother! The *jogī* is one who practices discipline (*yoga*);
And the *bhogī* is one who remains enticed by the world. 3
- O Brother! Formidable is the hour when the Great Day(*mahādīn*)¹ arrives!
On that day, one will be subject to severe punishment. 4
- O Brother! Surjā said, "Listen, my son Kamalā!
When sacred knowledge (*āgama*) comes, go acquire it." 5
- O Brother! If you are sincere before the Gurunara;
You will truly attain the vision (*dīdār*) of Paradise (*bahīṣṭa*) 6
- O Brother! "Prince Kamalā, listen to this talk about the Great Day!"
"Let us go then, Surjā, to the *jogī*." 7
- O Brother! The earth will smoulder and appear copper-coloured;
The keeper of books will appear at the end of time. 8
- O Brother! The *jogī* is he who practices discipline;
Of what use is it merely to don earrings? 9
- O Brother! Nor is anyone a *jogī* who wears ochre robes;
No indeed, we cannot truly call that person a *jogī* . 10
- O Brother! To the one who loves truth and keeps virtuous company;
A hundred, nay a thousand cheers are due! 11
- O Brother! Upon hearing this talk, Prince Kamalā departed;
He too became Immortal (*amar*). 12
- O Brother! Then Prince Kamalā's father, the King, came to the *jogī*,
[Thinking] "Let me listen to the *jogī*'s talk." 13
- O Brother! The vision of Paradise awaits one who conquers the world;
Listen to what the *jogī* has to say. 14
- O Brother! Hell (*dozakḥ*) awaits one who goes astray;
And one who does not believe in what the Guru says. 15
- O Brother! If one is from the same ancestor, one is no stranger;
But if one joins the company of strangers, one will go astray. 16

¹ That is, the Day of Judgement.



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O Brother! Pīr Shams has spoken this sacred speech (*āgama vāñī*):
“I am your servant (*bando*), I entreat you {O Lord}!” 17

O Brother! Those who follow not what has been inscribed on paper;
They will surely beat their breasts in remorse. 18



Satgur Shams said: This is the time of the tenth <i>avatār</i> , His ninth form (<i>rūpa</i>) has been changed and he now resides in the West (<i>paścim</i>).	1
If you recognise that form, it will be to your benefit; The gods (<i>devatā</i>) of this fourth age (<i>kalyug</i>) have acknowledged this.	2
Kṛṣṇa took form as the Buddha <i>avatār</i> and came to the Pāṇḍavas; Draupadī recognised him and delivered him into the hands of Kīrṇ; Yudhiṣṭhira.	3
He rescued Prahlād and the labours of Kamalā's husband were successful; He who rescued the fort in Rāma's form, that person has arrived today.	4
The <i>avatār</i> of this fourth age is Nakalāṅka; ¹ know that he is a Muslim; He who was wrathful with the infidels (<i>kāfir</i>), indeed he has come.	5
He has taken form (<i>avatār</i>) as the man Islām Shāh; know that he is the Satgur! Pīr Shams says: O pious ones, listen to this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>)!	6
Then Mākaḍa Bhudara demanded: Show him to us! Shams revealed the Shāh's form and they beheld the four-armed Swāmī.	7
Thereupon all were filled with faith (<i>īmān</i>) and gave the Guru great respect; They said: "All our hopes have been fulfilled for we saw Kṛṣṇa himself!"	8
The Satgur then disclosed the rules and prescriptions (<i>vrata</i>) of religion (<i>dharma</i>); "Pray together on Friday of the new moon and you will reach the other shore."	9
He made them recite the word (<i>japa</i>) Pīr Shāh, name of the Gurunara; Then Pīr Shams left and proceeded to the town of Ghazni.	10

¹ nakalāṅka: Guj. *niṣkalanika* – the one without blemish, the immaculate one;
reference to Kālki, the tenth *avatār*.



Do not make the mistake of disputing with the Gurunara, For he can imbalance the minds of strangers.	1
Those who make this mistake are labeled great sinners (<i>pāpī</i>); Without the Guru, the soul (<i>jīva</i>) cannot be freed.	2
The demon (<i>daitya</i>) will seat himself in a cross-legged posture; He will make the entire earth prostrate before him.	3
The devil Kaliṅga has forty-thousand demon attendants; Each one of whom will bring about great strife.	4
Reciting magic spells (<i>mantra</i>) over sand, they will produce grain; Thus will they run canteens which provide free food.	5
Reciting magic spells over water, the demons will make butter; Thus will they run canteens which provide free butter-fat.	6
Reciting magic spells over dust, the demons will produce sugar; Thus will they run canteens which provide free sugar.	7
Reciting magic spells over their wings, the demons will train parrots; Thus will they teach them to chant the name of Kaliṅga.	8
The demons will make wooden horses appear to be eating food; Indeed, they will promote such sorry spectacles.	9
The devil Kaliṅga will bring dead men back to life; In this fourth age [of evil], he will show them their [deceased] parents.	10
The demons will raise an umbrella beneath an overcast sky; They will let the rain lightly drizzle with a cool breeze.	11
The devil Kaliṅga will sell bread in exchange for copper coins; But my Swāmī Rājā can turn those into gold.	12
In times of such adversity, the heart will find no peace; But the Swāmī Rājā will protect it and preserve it.	13
Pir Shams recites this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) so full of great significance; Beware, for the demons will engineer such kinds of trickery.	14



- Sacrifice a tenth,¹ O Friend, and surrender your life in worship of Nara,
Pim, the Shāh! Inevitably upon your head will descend
... Day of Judgment (*qiyāmat*). Indeed, that day draws close! 1
- The Eternal Śyāma has himself taught that the path is thus;²
Pir Kabir al-Dīn says Pir Ṣadr al-Dīn said: As you sow, so shall you reap. 2
- Pir Shams says, O Friends! So long as you live, you can achieve [results].
After death, what can be done? But the negligent (*gāfal*) waste their lives.
Brother, how can they attain freedom (*mokṣa*)? 3
- Pir Shams says, O Friends! If you are negligent, you will lose.
Rather, O Brother, be vigilant day in and day out!
And join the company of the 33 crore deities, so said Pir Shams. 4
- Pir Shams says, O Friends! This fourth age (*kalyug*) is full of treachery.
O Brother, I have observed this even between friends;
The shoulder is offered in embrace but the hand twisted around.³ 5
- Pir Shams says, O Friends! If you strain too hard, [the cord] will snap;
Leave things be, do not hanker after them so;
Just as a spring flows naturally, so what you desire will come to you. 6
- Pir Shams says, O Friends! As a sword is sharpened by whetstone
And as clothing is washed with water;
So is the believer purified by wisdom (*ginān*)! So said Pir Shams. 7
- Pir Shams says, the fool who weeds not his soil cannot grow greens.
Likewise, unless the coward shoots off his arrow,
Brother, he will have no flesh to pack beneath his skin.⁴ 8
- Pir Shams says, O Friends! That which is born must also die.
Do not count upon the body! See, a blade of grass breaks and falls down.
Brother, every moment something perishes. 9
- Pir Shams visited four countries [and prayed:]
O Swāmī, upon you is our reliance! Fulfil our unfulfilled hopes,
O Swāmī, deliver us all to the other shore (*pahele pār*). 10

1 That is, of one's earnings; a reference to the tithe.

2 Verse is obscure.

3 Allusion to a technique of combat: the unsuspecting "friend" is hugged with one hand and knived with the other!

4 A reference to hunting, that is, he will have no food.



How does one recognise the Satgur when one meets him?
Only that mind that knows the test can see.
O Brother, he dwells in sandal woods and fresh-scented lime. 1

In the sandalwood forest, there lives our Beloved (*piyūn*);
Come, O Friend (*sakhi*)! Let's go to that forest to find joy for our souls (*jīv*). 2

In the mind (*man*) are the divisions 'you' and 'I'; leave these thoughts behind!
A mere curtain separates 'you' and 'I'; if you forget this, you are the fool! 3

'You' and 'I' are bonded in love; 'you' and 'I' speak words to each other.
'You' and 'I' are both one with the Lord; O Brother, dispel this curtain! 4

'You' and 'I' should not be arrogant, for pride destroys all;
If 'you' and 'I' killed our pride, we would attain our heart's desire. 5

'You' and 'I' passed the night together¹, do not forget that dear sir!
'You' and 'I' bathed in the moonlight; so bring a mind filled with affection (*heta*). 6

'You' and 'I' crossed the ocean even as the waves rose up high above us;
'You' and 'I' crossed the river and Satgur Sahadeva² showered us with Light (*nūr*). 7

Satgur's Light is concealed within; recognise the divine (*deva*) in the Guru;
What will you give to satisfy the Guru and what should be your service (*seva*)? 8

If you serve him with sincere mind, indeed, no gift is necessary;
Give the mind and heart full of love (*sneha*) and let the love greatly increase! 9

When the heart (*dil*) is given, all is given. Stay awake night and day, O my Brother!
Pir Shams said: Go join the ranks of the 33 crore deities! 10

¹ That is, endured fear, hardship and danger together
² This may be a reference to Pir Šadr al-Dīn who occasionally used this pen-name.



True is my Maker(<i>kḥāliq</i>), Creator of the world (<i>sirjaṇahār</i>); The Shāh created [the world] from utter darkness.	1
Prophet (<i>nabī</i>) Muḥammed was God's (<i>kḥudā</i>) chosen one; To the Prophet came a summons from Him.	2
In the summons, God made a command (<i>firmān</i>); Lo! From mere mud, a body took shape.	3
After creating the soul (<i>ruh</i>), He breathed life into it; Indeed, but for the soul, the body is an empty cage.	4
Strive to earn your goal, O Brother! Believe me, my Creator is trustworthy.	5
True is my Creator in whose grip is the prize of Paradise (<i>bahiṣṭa</i>); This wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) of supreme essence is the word of Pīr Shams.	6



- O Lucky Ones (*subhāgī*)! Worship the five holy ones¹ (*panj tan*) day in day out;
Let your concentration (*dhyāna*) rest upon the crown of the Guru. 1
- O Lucky Ones! Submit the tithe (*dasond*) and live according to the Guru;
Stop chattering about worldly things. 2
- O Lucky Ones! Life is momentary, so keep some water with you;
Purify the water and then drink it. 3
- O Lucky Ones! All that you eat and drink will vanish;
Only that which you give away remains secure. 4
- O Lucky Ones! What you give to the Shāh increases 150,000 fold;
The record-keeper (*dīwān*) is at each person's doorstep. 5
- O Lucky One! The hammer strikes the anvil;
Thus is the iron beaten and moulded into shape. 6
- O Lucky Ones! When all is devastated, the Lord (*rabb*) will take account;
So keep company with those who are certain. 7
- O Lucky Ones! The Shāh is the expert (*mullah*), the Shāh is the judge (*qāḍī*);
He himself is the Veda and the Qur'ān. 8
- O Lucky Ones! Station by station, the Sāheb will cross Sind;
He will soon come to visit Multān. 9
- O Lucky Ones! At the crossroad facing the four directions;
He will come there at the main square of Multān. 10
- O Lucky Ones! Pir Shams has spoken this essence-filled wisdom (*ginān*);
The faithful will get across to the other shore (*pahele pār*). 11

¹ The Prophet Muḥammad, his daughter Fāṭimah, son-in-law and cousin ʿAlī, and two grandsons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.



- O Lucky Ones (*subhāgī*)! What did you bring with you into the world?
What are you going to take back with you? 1
- O Lucky Ones! You were born naked and naked will you die!
So be scrupulous in your trade and dealings. 2
- O Lucky Ones! Bare were you born and bare-skinned will you die!
You will take nothing along with you. 3
- O Lucky Ones! When you lie on the stretcher with feet extended,
Your family will neither keep you nor come with you. 4
- O Lucky Ones! They will cover you with earth after the funeral rites;
Thus will you be bundled off to the Lord (*hari*). 5
- O Lucky Ones! Your body will crumble and turn into clay;
Ants and worms will feast upon your flesh. 6
- O Lucky Ones! Grass will take root over the top of your body;
Cows will come and graze on this grass. 7
- O Lucky Ones! That for which you have earned demerit;
It will not endure nor abide with you. 8
- O Lucky Ones! When the red-hot iron strikes your throat,
You will scream and cry out to no avail. 9
- O Lucky Ones! When the Swāmī Rājā asks for an account,
Those who have toiled will be amply rewarded. 10
- O Lucky Ones! Pīr Shams recited this wisdom (*ginān*) in essence supreme;
Those who are faithful will attain the other shore (*pahele pār*). 11



Alas, I have been struck by love (<i>mahobat</i>) for you! O my beloved Sāheb! My heart has been swept away by love! Permit our eyes to meet, O my precious Sāheb!	1
Part the curtains and look at me face-to-face; Let me see your smiling countenance, O my precious Sāheb!	2
Pir Shams yearns for your countenance (<i>sūrat</i>); Bless me with a vision (<i>dīdār</i>) of you, O my precious Sāheb!	3
O Beloved One, be not displeased with me; Take me along with you, O my precious Sāheb!	4
The ardour of youth does not last long; Like river waters, it rushes away, O my precious Sāheb!	5
All your lovers will come with you; Be tender to me in your heart, O my precious Sāheb!	6
Listen, O Enchanting Chabīlā,* the Lord who bewitches! Be compassionate towards me, O my precious Sāheb!	7
O Proud Jobana,* whose gait is full of mischief! Bear love for me in your heart, O my precious Sāheb!	8
O Beloved (<i>pīyā</i>), your mystery has driven me crazy! Let ardour (<i>‘ishq</i>) consume my mind, O my precious Sāheb!	9
When I beheld your face (<i>mukh</i>), my mind became ecstatic; Singing, Pir Shams has made you hear, O my precious Sāheb!	10

* Epithets of Kṛṣṇa.



The Coffin (janāzāh)

- Giving an order (*firmān*), the Lord said: "Listen, Pīr Shams!
Go amidst the following (*jamā'at*) today and administer a test of faith (*imān*). 1
- Pīr Shams replied: "Listen, O Shāh!
I will demand from the gathering (*gat*) whatsoever it is you wish." 2
- "Ask for bread made of *kāṭhā*¹ flour and order human flesh;
Whoever submits flesh will attain the abode of Heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*)." 3
- Then Pīr Shams departed and arrived at Uchh in Multān;
All followers assembled and prostrated: "O Gurujī, your wish is our command!" 4
- "Offer only what is within your means and be of steadfast mind;
But if you prepare some food for me, I will bestow heartfelt blessings (*āśīṣa*)." 5
- Pīr Shams then said: "Listen, O Gathering of followers (*gat jamā'at*)!
I require of you only this for which I shall bestow heartfelt blessings!" 6
- "Bring to me some bread made of *kāṭhā* flour and fetch me some human flesh;
The one who gives this flesh will attain a dwelling in Heaven." 7
- Stunned, the gathering discussed this: "Who will give up their own flesh?
Pīr Shams will save the resolute, but who, indeed, dares to go near the Pīr?" 8
- Pīr Shams sat down with a rosary to pray: "O Sūheb, preserve my honor (*lāj*)!"
For seven days he kept fast (*rojo*) and nobody dared to go near the Pīr. 9
- Then a blind mendicant arrived and promptly sat down in the prayer-house;
"Take your gold dagger in your hand and feast upon my flesh!" 10
- "Your offer has satisfied me. Auspicious (*dhanya*) that moment, blessed that night!
That day when you were born! Great, indeed, shall be your fortune!" 11
- Then Qāsim Shāh himself appeared and began the rite of Holy Water (*ghaṭ path*);
He brought a cupful of Light (*nūr*) and Pīr Shams accompanied him. 12
- Pīr Shams said: "Listen, O my Lord!
In the prayer-house is a blind sage; deliver him into Divine Light (*nūr ilāhī*). 13
- [The Shāh gave the blind mendicant the cup];²
He drank the cupful of Light (*nūr*) and lo! He witnessed the entire universe! 14
- Then Pīr Shams said: "O Blind Ascetic, listen!
Go and join the congregation for it is now time for us to depart." 15

¹ A kind of hard reddish wheat.

² The first line of this verse is missing in the Gujarati text.



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The blind mendicant stood up and he came amidst the following; "Now fetch the cases and prepare, for time has come for the Pīr to depart!"	16
The gathering asked the blind man: "Did you sacrifice yourself to the Pīr? Only yesterday, you bumped into walls but now you walk tall!"	17
"Yes, I sacrificed myself to the Pīr and thus drank of Divine Light; Had he not promised a place in Heaven to the sacrificer of one's flesh?"	18
The assembly pondered over his words and then approached the Pīr; "Take the gold dagger in your hand and feast upon our flesh."	19
"That opportunity has passed! Indeed who can consume human flesh?" "Now fetch the cases and prepare, for the time has come for the Pīr to depart!"	20
The whole gathering began to weep; men and women both wept! "If the Pīr departs from here upset, wretched will be our fate!"	21
Pīr Shams said: "Listen, O following! I will give the final verdict at my own place; now it is time to depart."	22
On Thursday, the seventeenth day of the month Vaiśākha, ¹ On that day the Pīr travelled all the way to Ucch in Multān.	23
Seventeen-hundred people followed the Pīr to his own place; Placing their cases there, they said: "Pīr give us your last decree."	24
Pīr Shams said: "Listen, O gathering! Every twelve months Keep a fast (<i>rojo</i>) on this day and you will attain Heaven (<i>vaikunṭha</i>)."	25
"All men and women must observe this fast, even little children; If every twelve months you keep the fast, you will attain Heaven."	26
Pīr Shams spoke his wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) firmly: "Listen, O Followers! Only thus will my curse not strike you, and you will attain Heaven."	27

¹ Seventh month of the Vikram year.



- O Swāmī, in your meadow, you are Guru Brahmā, the Gardener!
In the nine continents [of the world] you scatter seeds,
The Swāmī scattered countless seeds. 1
- In a marsh, you planted two seeds, one green, the other parched!
The one deprived of the Guru did not find a way out;
O Brother, dry was the one lacking the truth (*sat*). 2
- Tear out the roots of sin (*pāp*), O Brother, and the soul (*jīv*) will stay green!
Sever your head and submit it willingly to the Guru;
Then, the Gurunara will become your Helper (*belī*). 3
- Simple is the path of the Gurunara, the Helper, infallible is his word (*śabda*)!
The deeds by which the soul will be released,
Such deeds should you devotedly perform. 4
- O Devotees (*dāsa*), bear your faults humbly and be patient!
Entreat the Helper for his mercy!
Unique and constant is the colour of the Master (*patī*), easy is his path. 5
- O Pious ones (*rikhīsar*), meet and form a gathering for the sake of your souls!
Wear the four precious jewels on your forehead;¹
Brother, gain mastery over the five elements. 6
- Discharge your debts quickly and profit from the Guru's wisdom (*ginān*);
By the grace of the Lord (*nara*), Pīr Shams has spoken:
Adore the true Swāmī! 7

1 Allusion unknown.



- Thousands of husbands sleep easy but this groom is still a child;¹
Day and night, O Brother, the water-wheel turns. Swāmī is the Gardener. 1
- He has planted many fresh seeds; Swāmī is himself the Caretaker!
He tends the garden himself, he nourishes the garden himself!
The flowers and leaves yield fruits and the Swāmī enjoys their fragrance:
The heart of the Gardener is contented. 2
- From five buds came fifty blossoms all full-blown and beautiful;
A strong wind brought showers of Light (*nūr*). Indeed, the Eternal (*qā'im*) King
Made a wonderful garden. But then the Swāmī increased it in creepers—
So beware, my pious Brothers (*munivar*)! 3
- Meditate on religion (*dharma*), keep your word (*vāc*) and perform your duties!
Else you will repent when Yama comes today or tomorrow with his summons. 4
- Beware! Keep your vows (*vrata*) and earn your merit in this fourth age (*kalyug*);
By the grace of the Lord (*nara*), Pir Shams says: The tenth [*avatār*] is the Shāh!
He has kindled the Light (*jyota*) and made the Invisible (*alakha*) manifest. 5

¹ The meaning of this line is obscure.



In the city of love (<i>prem pāṭan</i>) lived King (<i>rājā</i>) Manaśudha; At his palace was his wife Queen (<i>rāṇī</i>) Radīyā.	1
Five prime-ministers came to stay there; They engaged the King in discussion.	2
The King and Queen dwelt in contemplation (<i>dhyāna</i>); They were devoted to the Swāmī.	3
The ministers inspected the city; Then they engaged the King in discussion.	4
The King and Queen remained in the palace; They unceasingly performed holy rites (<i>kriyā</i>).	5
Joining their two minds together, They strengthened their love (<i>pyār</i>) for Pīr Shams.	6
Of no other desire did they speak; Their utter concentration was on the Lord (<i>hari</i>).	7
The townsfolk, all of them used to say: The King's nature is full of devotion (<i>bhakti</i>).	8
The five prime-ministers lived there; They kept the city in its place.	9
The King and the Queen lived in the palace; The ministers administered all.	10
They lived in the city in such a manner, That no one could censure them.	11
Pīr Shams, the Defender of the faith (<i>ghāzī</i>), said: They received only praise from the townsfolk.	12
The city of love was a town; Nay, it should be called a city.	13
Its foundations were broad and strong; Encircling it was a fortress of Light (<i>prakāś</i>).	14
Its new gates were truly attractive; What exquisite skill had gone into their decoration!	15
Ornate with rich and delicate designs, At the summit [of the fortress] was an open court.	16
Composed of seventy-two chambers; Its brick were layed in countless patterns.	17



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Four vazirs stood at its gates; Lofty indeed was their abode.	18
It went beyond one's eyesight, so high was it; Supreme was this fortress of Light.	19
It had sixty-four squares and sixteen junctions; It had three-hundred-and-sixty bazars.	20
Lovely indeed was this city, It were as if created on Mount Kailāsa.	21
A mighty army lived in its square; Nearby was the guest-house for visitors.	22
The river bank flowed abundantly; Its sweet, unending waters sparkled.	23
In such a way did the King and Queen live; Their kingdom was filled with Light.	24
Listen, O pious ones (<i>rīkhīsar</i>) to all of them, Who lived with the King and Queen.	25
Kamalā was the King's attendant; Listen to his thoughts!	26
Broad and strong were its foundations; Inside the city was the imperial palace.	27
The King and Queen sat in the palace; They sat forlorn all eight quarters of the day.	28
Diamonds and jems sparkled and shone, Bright as the light of the sun.	29
(Change tune)	
Then the King had a thought: "Let me go to the Guru! Let me submit a plea standing on top of the palace.	30
Let me have quiet converse night and day with the Gurunara!" Having thus entreated him, the Guru heard his plea.	31
Awakening at midnight, he thought about him; When the sun rose at dawn, Pīr Shams arrived.	32
Pīr Shams made a speech and [the King said], "Come visit our home." [He replied] "Make the preparations—we will return in six months."	33
(Change tune)	
The King and Queen remained standing, but seated the Pīr on a dais.	34
Lovingly they washed his feet making many a plea.	35
"Profound is our reverence for you; you have fulfilled our request.	36



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Indeed, Gurujī has been gracious for he has come to visit us! 37

Be merciful, dear Lord and lead us to the divine vision (*didār*)!" 38

The King and Queen said: "Be merciful, be kind!" 39

"Great is the reward for paying the tithe (*dasonḍ*). so deliver us! 40

Bring to us the eternal reward that we may attain the other shore (*pahele pār*). 41

They entertained the Guru fondly and rendered him much service (*sevā*). 42

(Change tune)

Day and night they had conversations with the Gurunara:
Having occupied himself thus, the King became elated. 43

The King said: "Listen to me, O Queen, about the chaste ones (*satī*):
Single-minded should be our attention on the Gurunara!" 44

The Queen replied: "Listen King, this is a matter of secrecy!
Let us pay our respects to the Gurunara and become his followers. 45

Mercifully he granted us divine vision and our deeds are redeemed;
He will certainly keep his promise (*kol*) and accomplish our task." 46

The King's heart rejoiced when the Gurujī spoke his wisdom (*ginān*);
The King listened attentively and the Queen came nearby. 47

(Change tune)

There the Gurujī spoke his wisdom (*ginān*);
Listen to the essence, O pious ones! 48

Who acts upon the teachings of the Gurunara,
That one reaches the other shore (*pahele pār*). 49

You have arrived at the site of the sixty-fourth pilgrimage (*tīrtha*);¹
Know that it is at the feet of the Guru. 50

For millions of aeons and ages the Gurujī has come;
Infinite is his artistry and perpetual. 51

God (*devatā*) in his tenth manifestation (*avatār*),
Assumed a form (*rūpa*) and became visible. 52

The Supreme King first came in the form of a Fish (*Matsya*);
He was the support for the seer Mṃgḍala. 53

In his form as Tortoise (*Kūrma*), he churned the ocean;
The fourteen jewels were thus recovered. 54

He came to the aid of King Ambarīśa;
Thus the King reached the other shore. 55

¹ adasaṭha ūratha: the last of the 64 pilgrimages to be performed by the brahmin.



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In the form of the Boar (<i>Varāha</i>), he seized the universe; He clenched the whole of it with his great teeth.	56
Nārāyaṇa then descended as the Lion (<i>Narasimha</i>); Prahlaḍ fell prostrate and begged at his feet.	57
In the form of the Dwarf (<i>Vāmana</i>) he spoke; He delivered Kamalā, the fortunate.	58
Paṇḍurāma twirled his axe around six times; He grabbed Kamalā's husband in his hand.	59
In the form of Rāma, he killed Rāvaṇa; He took a hold of Hariścandra's hand.	60
He saved Hariścandra's son, Rohita As well as his wife, Queen Tārāmatī.	61
Luckily, he came as Kṛṣṇa! He protected Draupadī ¹ with reams of cloth.	62
In this fourth age (<i>kalyug</i>), he has become manifest; He is 'Alī, mighty comrade of Muḥammad.	63
Whoever worships him single-mindedly, That man or woman will be delivered.	64
Thus did Pīr Shams, the Defender of faith (<i>ghāzī</i>), speak To the King and his Queen.	65
(Change tune)	
Hearing the Guru's wisdom (<i>ginān</i>), the King's heart was convinced! "We entreat you Pīr Shams, we prostrate at the Guru's feet.	66
Hearing the Guru's wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) has given assurance to our hearts; The Lord who has been so merciful will take us to the Eternal abode (<i>amar vās</i>)."	67
"Come to Multān both of you, O King and Queen! I will send you two messengers after six months have passed."	68
So saying, Pīr Shams arose from there to depart; "Listen my words, and hasten to visit me!"	69
(Change tune)	
The King's heart was enraptured and he said to the Queen:	70
"Guruji has been merciful! He has come again and again."	71
The pious (<i>satī</i>) remained standing and talked about religion (<i>dharma</i>).	72
They followed the True Path (<i>satpanth</i>) and recalled the unutterable word (<i>jāp</i>). ²	73

¹ pañcāvali: *Pañcālī*: the princess of Pañcala, namely, Draupadī.

² ajampiyā jāpa: lit. the sacred word which is not to be uttered; the mantra.



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Then the Gurunara dispatched a disciple to deliver a summons (<i>hukam</i>). ¹	74
A summons had come from the Guru; how could it be neglected?	75
The summons had come for two people; how could a third be taken along?	76
The summons had come now but they had a child; should it be taken along?	77
The Queen asked the King: "How can we go?"	78
Queen Rāḍiyā said: "O King, think! What are we to do?"	79
King Manaśudha replied: "We will go to the Lord (<i>deva</i>) [alone]."	80
The child was laid down to rest and the two prepared to leave.	81
Thinking of the Gurujī, they left and came past the guest-house.	82
The road bruised their bare feet, but they both kept walking on.	83
When the King reached half-way, a deer was feeding its young.	84
Sighting the fawn, on the spot the Queen became distressed with pain.	85
So severe was her pain, she instantly died, and the King had to think.	86
"The command has come for two. Now what can be done?"	87
Covering her in a sheet, he tied a knot and started towards the Lord.	88
When at last he arrived at his entrance, he prostrated himself at the Guru's feet.	89
Golden lights sparkled and there sat the Lord of three worlds (<i>tribhovar</i>), Śyāma.	90
"Rise, Queen Rāḍiyā! Drink the Immortal nectar (<i>amṛta</i>) and feed your child!"	91
Abiding by the Gurunara's words, they had come to the Lord's porch.	92
Worship with single mind and concentrate (<i>dhyāna</i>) upon the Gurunara!	93
Remain in the refuge of the Gurunara and you will attain the other shore.	94
The King and the Queen were both delivered together with their child.	95
The Guru said: "Listen, O pious ones, to the story about the King and Queen!"	96
Pīr Shams recited this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>), listen O Congregation (<i>gat jamā'at</i>)!	97
(Change tune)	
Pīr Shams, the Defender of faith, recited this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) at that time;	
He who believes the Gurunara to be true will reach the other shore.	98
Think about this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>), O pious Brothers! Do not talk about other things!	
Serve (<i>sevā</i>) your Shāh single-mindedly and you will attain Heaven (<i>vaikunṭha</i>).	99

¹ Note the resemblance between the following verses and Ginān # 9.



O Brothers! Darkness will follow upon darkness; So will it be on the Day of Judgment (<i>qiyāmah</i>)!	1
O Brothers! Fifty-thousand will remain unconscious; There will be rainfalls of fire!	2
O Brothers! Titanic mountains will come smashing down; Waterfalls will be ablaze with flames!	3
O Brothers! Mt. Meru will tremble and its boulders fracture; The earth will be engulfed in water!	4
O Brothers! So fitfully will the sky shake, The land will be sick with calamity!	5
O Brothers! The colour of the earth will change; It will turn into the reds of copper!	6
O Brothers! Khudāvand himself will sit to take account; He will demand the price of each and every grain!	7
O Brothers! The thirty-five crore strands of hair will harden into iron; Time and again, they will prick the body!	8
O Brothers! Neither wares nor wealth will be of any use; Only your earnings of meritorious deeds!	9
O Brothers! In forty-eight hours such a hurricane will blast, Rocks and stones will fly in all directions!	10
O Brothers! The earth will be utterly demolished; In accordance with God's (<i>ilāhī</i>) decree (<i>firmān</i>)!	11
O Brothers! Calling Indra, Khudāvand will give blessing (<i>duʿa</i>) To him who brings forth rain and storm!	12
O Brothers! Twelve types of rain will begin to pour, When God's command (<i>hukam</i>) arrives!	13
O Brothers! Water will cascade in such proportions, Even the resolute North Star (<i>Dhruva</i>) will shudder!	14
O Brothers! The waters will seethe to such a degree, Nothing can be said to describe it!	15
O Brothers! Then what will all you pious ones (<i>rīkhīsar</i>) do? It will be impossible for you to swim!	16
O Brothers! The Pīr reports what is in the scriptures (<i>āgama</i> , <i>veda</i>); Listen, O my dear believers (<i>muʾmin</i>)!	17



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O Brothers! Take care and preserve your life! Pir Shams has said this.	18
O Brothers! Pir Shams Qalandar said: O Kḥudāvand! Who can attain the limits of your infinite Self!	19



- O Brother! He turned four moments into four ages (*yug*),
Kṛudāvand told this to the sea. 1
- O Brother! In the first three ages, religion (*dharma*) prevailed;
But this fourth age of Kalyug will be precarious. 2
- O Brother! Father and son will battle with each another,
Such awful scenes will you witness. 3
- O Brother! The wife will demand her mother-in-law for expenses;
Listen, O my Brother believers (*mu'min*)! 4
- O Brother! Both the sky and the earth will roar with laughter;
An amazing God (*ilāhi*) indeed is Kṛudāvand! 5
- O Brother! The pious ones (*rīkhīsar*) will have fear in their hearts;
Listen, O my Brother believers! 6
- O Brother! Imagine what will be their condition,
Those who have misused their authority. 7
- O Brother! This raw body will be useless there;
For it has been made of mere clay. 8
- O Brother! Indeed, of what use will be your pride in it?
Listen, O my Brother believers! 9
- O Brother! In a split second you will rise and depart;
The world will just sit back and watch. 10
- O Brother! Further on, Kṛudāvand will ask you,
"What good deeds have you brought along?" 11
- O Brother! Then my pious ones, what will you do?
At that instant, nothing can be done. 12
- O Brother! All your wealth and possessions will be in vain;
For you can take nothing along with you. 13
- O Brother! Merit (*puṇya*) and sin (*pāp*), these alone will you take;
On that occasion, drums will be beaten. 14
- O Brother! Pīr Shams Qalandar has said this;
O Kṛudāvand! Who can attain the limits of your infinite Self! 15



- O Friend! Whatever you do, do it of your own will;
For the world will be of no help. 1
- O Friend! If you succeed, indeed you will attain the divine vision (*didār*);
But you must overcome your worldly cravings. 2
- O Friend! Pay the tithe (*dasond*) and take refuge in truth;
The mother [of truth] will raise you to the other shore (*pār*). 3
- O Friend! Lost fools they are who lack in good deeds (*kriyā*);
They will remain upon this shore. 4
- O Friend! Word by word I have revealed this to you;
So Brother, worship (*ārāḍhanā*) in the correct manner. 5
- O Friend! By the Pīr's words you can be saved;
Where the Pīr puts you, settle yourself there. 6
- O Friend! I am the master and I am the servant;
My name is Fortunate One (*subhāgī*). 7
- O Friend! I did not strike a deal anywhere else;
Rather, I sold my goods only to the Shāh. 8
- O Friend! The lightest weight cannot measure a grain of flour;
Humble yourself into such a tiny grain. 9
- O Friend! Without merit, no one can be saved;
How will you easily save yourselves? 10
- O Friend! King Prahād delivered fifty-million [souls];
Hariścandra delivered seventy-million. 11
- O Friend! In the second age, the five Pāṇḍavas arrived;
They granted success to the works of the pious. 12
- O Friend! King Yudhiṣṭhira saved ninety-million;
All twelve attained Khudāvand. 13
- O Friend! Serve (*sevā*) firmly, says Pīr Shams;
O Brother believers (*mu'min*), pay the tithe! 14



Abridged¹ Das Avatār

- Know what marvels the Shāh, the lord (*deva*) Murāri has executed!
Swāmī descended into the ocean in the form (*rūpa*) of the Fish (*Matsya*);
The Shāh slew the demon Śaṅkha; ‘Alī made the Invisible (*alakha*) manifest.
Listen gathering (*gat*), be attentive! Now the Lord Murāri is the Shāh.
Listen gathering, bring hither a firm mind! The Shāh resides in Kahak.
Listen gathering, bring hither a firm mind! The Pīr lives with the Shāh.
Listen gathering, bring hither a firm mind! The Eternal (*qā'im*) is All-Forgiving. 1
- The second time the Swāmī descended as the Tortoise (*Kaurabha*) *avatār*,
Scorching their backs, the Shāh killed the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha. 2
- Swāmī's third descent was as the Boar (*Varāha*) whom none could cheat;
Thus he slew Mura, for the Shāh knew the demon's intentions. 3
- Swāmī's fourth form was that of the Man-Lion (*Narasimha*), King of Kashmir;
With his nails, the Shāh tore apart Hiranyakaśipu at a place midway. 4
- In the third age, the Shāh's fifth form was the brahmin Dwarf (*Vāmana*);
For failing to recognise him, the Swāmī sacked the demon Bali who lost all. 5
- His sixth form was as Parśurām and he gave the army (*kṣatriya*) weapons;
The Shāh threw Sahasrārjuna into a cage; each time he performed newer feats. 6
- Swāmī's seventh descent was as Rāma who triumphed over Kumbha in Laṅkā;
He slew Mandodari's husband, the ten-headed demon Rāvaṇa. 7
- The eighth form was the child Govinda who was called Kṛṣṇa;
He killed Kāṃsa and Cāṇūra. Indeed, we too are lucky to have the Shāh. 8
- In the ninth form as Buddha, he sat in deep concentration (*dhyāna*);
The Shāh destroyed all the Kauravas;
The Shāh killed Duryodhana, and the Pāṇḍavas attained freedom (*mokṣa*). 9
- Verily, his tenth form is right before you—the Shāh rides upon a chariot!
He who has impurities in his heart, how will he get across?
Leave the sixty-three rebirths,² and seek the thirty-three [million gods]!
The promise-keeper has come at the last juncture;³
Know him, recognise him, for now the promised one has arrived;
Pīr Shams says, Listen O gathering of believers (*mu'min*): Be true in conduct! 10

1 nāno lit. small, little, tiny.

2 varana: Skt. *varṇa* – lit. colour; social division, caste.

3 That is, the fourth age, Kalyug.



Listen to a tale, ¹ O my Brothers! I have entered a clear path (<i>panth</i>).	1
"Whose daughter are you, who is your brother-in-law?" [They asked me], "In which man's house are you wife?"	2
"I am daughter of the truth(<i>sat</i>), sister-in-law of satisfaction (<i>santoṣ</i>); My husband is a resolute man.	3
I deserted my steadfast husband while he was asleep; I left my dear child swinging in its cradle.	4
I removed some milk from my breast and left it in the oven; Then I departed for the portal of my Lord (<i>deva</i>).	5
For the sake of my Lord, I have given up everything; I have no desire to go to any other place.	6
I have thoughts of nothing else; My only concern now is for my soul (<i>jīva</i>).	7
For the sake of my soul, I have relinquished all; I have come to take refuge (<i>śaraṇa</i>) in you.	8
In the skirt of truth are the strings of contentment; I weave it with the knots of concentration (<i>dhyāna</i>).	9
In the vessel of truth is the spout of satisfaction; I sprinkle [the waters] of religion (<i>dharma</i>) in all directions.	10
Pir Shams says, Listen, O my Brothers! I have come as I had promised (<i>kol</i>).	11

¹ śabda: lit. word.



- Give ear, O Muḥmins, be attentive and listen! Listen to this precious message:
Fear the Day of Judgment (*qiyāmah*)! Yes, let your hearts be filled with fear!
The Prophet Muḥammad asked Gabriel: "How many times must you come back?
How many times will you have to return to this world after me?"
Gabriel replied: "Listen, O Prophet Muḥammad! I must return ten times." 1
- O Muḥammad! The first time that I must return,
That first time I will come to take away good fortune (*barakat*).
I will take away fortune from the world and nothing of it will remain. 2
- O Muḥammad! The second time that I must return,
That second time I will come to take away love (*mahobat*).
I will take away love from the world and all will be empty of love. 3
- O Muḥammad! The third time that I must return,
That third time I will come to take away mercy (*rahemat*).
I will take away mercy from the world and only a few crops will ripen. 4
- O Muḥammad! The fourth time that I must return,
That fourth time I will come to take away honor (*ṣaram*).¹
I will take the wife's regard for her husband and all will behave like beasts. 5
- O Muḥammad! The fifth time that I must return,
That fifth time I will come to take away charity (*sakhāvat*).
I will take away good will from the rich and nothing of it will remain. 6
- O Muḥammad! The sixth time that I must return,
That sixth time I will come to take away faith (*imān*).
Only a few will be faithful and the rest will be traitors. 7
- O Muḥammad! The seventh time that I must return,
That seventh time I will come to take away the word of honor (*kol*).
The ruler himself will be dishonest and will not keep his promise. 8
- O Muḥammad! The eighth time that I must return,
That eighth time I will come to take away justice (*adal*).
I will take away fairness from kings and everywhere there will be treachery. 9
- O Muḥammad! The ninth time that I must return,
That ninth time I will come to take away forbearance (*sabūr*).
I will take away patience from the world and all will be restless. 10
- O Muḥammad! The tenth time that I must return,
That tenth time I will come to take away the Qurʾān.
I will take away the Qurʾān from the world and nothing will remain. 11

¹ lit. shame, self-respect.



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No one in the universe will realise, all will be lost in ignorance (*jāhil*);
No one will attain knowledge (*ilm*), all will perceive only the outer clothing;
Indeed, they will take as Lord (*kḥudā*) those who wear saffron robes!
Know that these ten will come true in good time, and thus beware, O Brother!
When abundance, love, honor—these ten things—leave the world,
Recognise it to be an omen of the Day of Judgment (*qiyāmah*).
Pir Shams Qalandar says: The turn of Qā'im Shāh¹ has come.

12

¹ The king of Resurrection.



- On the beautiful day of the New Year (*navroz*),
The venerable Lord (*śrī hari*) Qā'im went to the forest to hunt.
The minds of his servants became forlorn
For their spirits lay at the Lord's (*hari*) feet. 1
- Having bound our minds with love (*prīta*) to Śrī Qā'im,
For love of our Lord (*nara*), we too proceeded to the forest.
In the forest, made beautiful by his presence, we saw the venerable Sāheb.
Submitting our hearts (to him), we stayed with our Lord (*deva*). 2
- Fortunate it was that our thoughts of the Sāheb were so strong,
For when we went to the forest to hunt with the venerable Lord (*hari*) Qā'im,
He fulfilled all our countless wishes!
Our hearts were filled with love for our Lord (*deva*). 3
- Bind yourselves to the Lord (*hari*) with joyful love;
Soak yourselves in the steadfast dye [of love] for the Sāheb!
So bound were our thoughts to Lord (*nara*) Qā'im
He filled our laps with pearls and the treasures of truth (*sat*). 4
- We went on a merry picnic with our Sāheb,
And thus we gained great prosperity.
One who listens attentively to this wisdom (*ginān*)
That soul (*jīv*), it will be saved. 5
- When the soul attains ultimate union (*yukti*)
The spirit will sport on its own.
From love will rise the tasteful aroma of sandalwood,
And like a swan in a lake, [the soul] will frolic in ecstasy. 6
- Shāh K̲halīl Allāh dwells there in the fort where he reigns;
Showing mercy upon me, he summoned me, Fateh 'Alī Shāh, there.
Then he fulfilled all our countless hopes!
The Lord (*hari*) eternally manifests his Light (*nūr*). 7
- O Brother believers (*mu'min*), worship devotedly!
Shams says, listen, O you pious ones (*ṛṣi*)!
He who never forgets the virtues of the Sāheb,
His spirit will never suffer. 8



The universe is in my heart and Allah resides within it; It is He who eternally sustains nature. Indeed, He is Allah!	1
Listen, O Scholar (<i>mullah</i>)! Listen, O Judge (<i>qāḍī</i>)! It is He who gave rise to creation. Indeed, He is Allah!	2
From this very clay, He fashioned the entire world! So how do you tell the Muslim apart from the Hindu? Indeed, He is Allah!	3
The Hindu is the one who goes on sixty-four pilgrimages; The Muslim is the one who goes to the mosque. Indeed, he is Allah!	4
But neither of them, Hindu nor Muslim, knows of my Shāh; The Shāh sits within—he is the Immaculate (<i>nirāñjan</i>). Indeed, he is Allah!	5
My heart is my prayer-mat, and Allah is my judge; My body is my mosque. Indeed, He is Allah!	6
Within myself, I sit and submit my prayers (<i>namāz</i>); What can a fool know of my worship (<i>tāʿat</i>). Indeed, He is Allah!	7
If [food] comes my way, I feast—if not, I fast; Thus my mind remains fixed on my Sāheb. Indeed, he is Allah!	8
A believer (<i>muʾmin</i>) is he who comes to know all the secrets; He walks upon the path of knowledge (<i>ʿilm</i>). Indeed, He is Allah!	9
Through study (<i>gyān</i>) and meditation (<i>dhyān</i>) he comes to realise all things; Searching and penetrating, he discovers all. Indeed, He is Allah!	10
Says Pīr Shams, Listen, O my Brothers! How can you cross to the other shore without the Pīr? Indeed, He is Allah!	11



Know! Realise! Recognise the one who has authority! Thus commands (<i>firmān</i>) the Gurunara.	1
Nārāyaṇa assumed the form of ‘Alī; Brother, his turn came along too.	2
‘Alī exists and has always existed; This creation is his masterpiece.	3
In this day and age, serve Shāh Mahdī; Do not be forgetful, O my Brother!	4
By virtue of King Prahlād, fifty-million [were saved]; They profited by following the Guru's advice.	5
Seventy-million [were saved] by King Hariścandra; They attained a home in the City of Immortality (<i>amarāpurī</i>).	6
Ninety-million [were saved] by King Yudhiṣṭhira; They remained ever close to the Eternal (<i>qāʿim</i>) .	7
One-hundred and twenty million [were saved] by Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn; The entire <i>jamāʿat</i> went with him.	8
Come together and contemplate the true Shāh; Dispel all doubts from your mind!	9
Indeed, draw from this wisdom (<i>ḡinān</i>) the essence of Immortality (<i>amṛta</i>)! Pīr Shams has recited and conveyed it to you.	10



Search for goodness here, search for goodness! Attach yourself to the rope of truth (<i>sat</i>).	1
Cleanse yourselves here, be pure in conduct! Do not let dirt smear your soul.	2
As gold is tested by rubbing it against a touchstone, So be sure to put your own self to the test.	3
As colour-fast dye is applied to cloth, So set your own hue from within yourself.	4
If you want to meet, then meet in secret; ¹ But outside, perform sacrifice (<i>yajña</i>).	5
The one who's cup the Guru fills, That disciple drinks and drinks in ecstasy.	6
Pir Shams, the Generous, recites this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>); Destroy the five ² and hold steadfast to prayer.	7

¹ lit. between the curtains.

² That is, the five senses or the five evils of greed, lust, etc. See 1:1



- O Devotee! I heard this in a dream, O yes, I heard it!
You cannot attain [liberation] whilst living in the world. 1
- O Brother! Do trade and earn an honest living, O yes, earn it!
For you will not return to this world again. 2
- O Devotee! Give charity with your own hands, O yes, your own!
Then you will not have to chew on your own fingers.¹ 3
- O Devotee! Control your five, O yes, your five;
Then certainly you will attain the City of Immortality (*amarāpurī*). 4
- O Devotee! In the fifth month, the soul was cast forth, O yes, it was cast;
In the sixth, it was enkindled with Light (*prakāś*). 5
- O Devotee! In the seventh, fire awakened the body, O yes, awakened it;
In the eighth, the eyes witnessed the Lord (*kḥudāvand*). 6
- O Devotee! In the ninth, the Satgur sent it on earth, O yes, he sent it;
He took from it the promise (*kol*) to give tithe (*dasond*). 7
- O Devotee! Twelve years [the soul] lived as a child, O yes, as a child;
At the age of twenty, it became a youth. 8
- O Devotee! For forty years it did not pray nor practice austerities;
Dealing in foolish things, it lost all. 9
- Developing a taste [for pleasure], it forgot the Swāmī;
In its greed, the foolish soul forgot its Mawlā. 10
- The Satgur dyed a cloth with coloured dots;
He dyed it with many colours. 11
- From the West, Mawlā will come, O yes, the Beloved will come;
He, the true Lord (*kḥudāvand*) will certainly come. 12
- The fort at Cīnab is crooked, O yes, it is crooked;
Know that a demon dwells in Yodhā. 13
- Kaliṅga will be beheaded, O yes, beheaded;
He will be spun into the middle of the sea. 14
- O Devotee! Make your body a boat, O yes, a boat;
Do business with it for the sake of the Shāh. 15
- O Devotee! You will rise up to the thirty-three [gods], O yes, rise up;
Once you have mastered the five. 16

¹ That is, you will never go hungry.



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Pir Shams, the Defender of faith (*ghāzi*), has spoken and told;
Pir Shams has recited this and made you listen.

17



40

The Fourteen Jewels

- The first jewel is to love (*prīta*) the Sāheb;
Take such a priceless jewel and safeguard it. 1
- The second jewel is to know the Guru's wisdom (*ginān*) in one's heart;
O Brother, realise the true vision (*darśan*) of your Shāh Pir! 2
- The third jewel is to think hard about the spirit of religion (*dharma*);
O Pious Ones(*munivar*): Practice the precepts of the True Faith (*sat dharma*). 3
- The fourth jewel is to be humble, patient and kind hearted;
Then indeed will you realise your Gurunara as the true and just. 4
- The fifth jewel is to serve (*sevā*) the Guru as if he were your guest;
Felicitations to him who satisfies the Guru's heart! 5
- The sixth jewel is to serve one's mother and father with great devotion ;
O Brother, hold fast to such a priceless jewel in the heart! 6
- The seventh jewel is to heed the words of the ascetic at your doorstep;
A believer (*mu'min*) listens to him and does not turn him away empty-handed. 7
- The eighth jewel is to make haste in helping the poor and suffering;
Lovingly feed them grain and water and you will surely go to the Immortal City. 8
- The ninth jewel is to keep pure one's trust in Muḥammad and Allah;
Be firm and steadfast in faith (*īmān*) and you will receive divine blessings. 9
- The tenth jewel is not to miss the three times of prayer (*du'ā*) , O believer!
Then alone will the Sāheb accept your tithe (*dasand*) as legitimate. 10
- The eleventh jewel is to place one's hopes in Allah;
Think before you speak and ask the Shāh for truth (*sat*)!
Injure none with words nor be greedy, for greed is hell's abyss!
Always beg the Shāh for goodness. 11
- The twelfth jewel is never to afflict children with pain;
For surely God (*brahma*) comes in their form!
Nor be needlessly ferocious towards ant or beast!
As the moth extinguishes itself in flame, so kill your ego while alive. 12
- The thirteenth jewel, for one who has attained the True Path (*sat mārga*),
Is to deliver the body into flames for the sake of the soul;
Just as King Hariścandra, Queen Tārā, Prince Locana and Rohidās
Gave themselves up for the sake of truth. 13
- The fourteenth jewel is to be constantly vigilant, O Saintly Ones (*munivar*)!
Those who, in the name of Allah, perform virtues and gives with satisfaction,
Ahead, such pious will reap abundant fruit and enjoy immensely.
These fourteen jewels Pīr Shams has made manifest by relating them to you. 14



Yes sir! There the Swāmī Rājā mounts the horse Duldul; He grants the believer (<i>muʾmin</i>) his heart's desire.	1
Yes sir! There he freshens the horses of the army With the full waters of the Ganges.	2
Yes sir! There a nightingale sings and a hammock swings; The [army] rides before the wind.	3
Yes sir! There he shakes up seven lakes; The ground cannot support his weight.	4
Yes sir! There in Yodhā is the brave bowholder Bhīma; Fearless, all treasures are his.	5
Yes sir! There three-hundred and thirty bowmen climb; Arjuna's army is endless.	6
Yes sir! There Sahadeva and Nakula are truly praiseworthy; They destroy the mountain with their weapons.	7
Yes sir! There King Prahlaḍ delivered fifty-million; Hārīścandra delivered seventy-[million].	8
Yes sir! There King Yudhiṣṭhira delivered ninety-million; He also rescued the five Pāṇḍavas.	9
Yes sir! There King Yudhiṣṭhira delivered ninety-million; Twelve-[million] attained the Lord (<i>ḡhudāvand</i>).	10
Yes sir! There a countless million march in the Shāh's army; Their limits cannot be found.	11
Yes sir! There five-hundred thousand came with Lord (<i>īśvar</i>) Gorakha; They all came blowing on trumpets.	12
Yes sir! There seventy-thousand mount with Ḥusayn; The entire world is shaken with rumbling noise.	13
Yes sir! There about nine-hundred million and fifty-six Of the castes of Medhā and Ḍamara find salvation.	14
Yes sir! There thirty-two million of the Kīnara caste climb; They all attain the shining Lord (<i>nara</i>).	15
Yes sir! There twenty-five million blow horns for the Shāh; Nine [million] are descendants of the Nāgas.	16
Yes sir! There former armies walk around the Shāh; Six-hundred and forty-thousand attain union.	17



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Yes sir! There the Shāh advances four arm-lengths on his wooden slippers; He slays the demon Kālīṅga.	18
Yes sir! There Queen Surjā warns, "Listen, Kālīṅga! ‘Alī has come with a great army.’"	19
Yes sir! There comes ‘Alī from the West to the East; And Yodhā meets its end.	20
Yes sir! There the Shāh as Fish (<i>Matsya</i>) dried up the ocean; He killed the demon Śaṅkhā.	21
Yes sir! There the Shāh twisted devil Śaṅkhā's head; He prevented him from stealing the Veda.	22
Yes sir! There as Tortoise (<i>Kaurabha</i>) he slew Madhu and Kaiṭabha; He set them on fire from behind.	23
Yes sir! There the Shāh churned the seven lakes; With his own eyes, he used snakes to churn them.	24
Yes sir! There the Shāh took form as the Boar (<i>Varāha</i>); The Shāh killed the demon Muḍa.	25
Yes sir! There he rescued King Prahlād who saved fifty-million; He destroyed the demon Hiranyakaśipu.	26
Yes sir! There the many coloured Shāh sat as the Dwarf (<i>Vāmana</i>); Stepping on King Bali's head, he banished him to hell.	27
Yes sir! There the Shāh prisoned Sahasrārjuna in a cage; He, the Lord, was known as Parśurām.	28
Yes sir! There in the form of Rāma, the Shāh recovered Sītā; He killed the ten-headed demon Rāvaṇa.	29
Yes sir! There the Shāh slew the ten-headed Rāvaṇa; He gave sovereignty to Vibhiṣaṇa.	30
Yes sir! There as Kṛṣṇa, the Shāh slew the serpent; He relieved the weight on the lotuses.	31
Yes sir! There his eighth form was the child Nanda Govinda; He killed the demon Kāṁsa.	32
Yes sir! There the Shāh became manifest in the form of Buddha; He saved the five Pāṇḍavas.	33
Yes sir! There he rescued King Yudhiṣṭhira who saved ninety-million; He slay the demon Duryodhana.	34
Yes sir! There the Shāh has now become manifest in his tenth form; He is known by the name and form (<i>rūpa</i>) of ‘Alī.	35
Yes sir! There he rides on Duldul, and the trumpets are blown; By a mere puff, he can cause a mountain to crumble.	36



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- Yes sir! There before the world is the Shāh's sword Ḍhulfikār;
So brightly does the Light (*teja*) of ʿAlī shine forth. 37
- Yes sir! There six thousand instruments will play for the Shāh;
ʿAlī will come on to the field. 38
- Yes sir! There ʿAlī will come with Ḍhulfikār from the West;
No one will dare challenge him face to face. 39
- Yes sir! There his horse Duldul will gallop, and the earth will shake;
When ʿAlī will come on to the field. 40
- Yes sir! There the serpent Vāsukī will tremble in the seventh hell;
The ground cannot support his weight. 41
- Yes sir! There when he sees the mustache-faced devil (*dāṇav*);
Yodhā will have an earthquake. 42
- Yes sir! There the Shāh's weapons will move faster than the wind;
They will tear asunder the heads of the demons (*daitya*). 43
- Yes sir! There, Pīr Shams says, listen O gathering of believers (*muʿmin*)!
You will have a vision (*didār*) of the Shāh. 44
- Yes sir! There Pīr Shams, the Qalandar of ʿAlī, says:
The sky will thunder with the Shāh's countless¹ weapons!
The Sāheb of innumerable wanderers will mount his horse,
And nothing will be able to arrest his speed. 45

¹ lit. sixty-four and eighty-six pairs of weapons.



Blessed (<i>dhanya</i>) indeed are you, O Swāmī Rājā, O Beloved Creator (<i>sirjaṇahār</i>)! From utter darkness, my Shāh has created the world.	1
The Prophet Muḥammad was beloved to my Shāh; The Prophet Muḥammad went to reside in Heaven (<i>svarga</i>) with the Lord.	2
From his sweat, my Beloved Lord (<i>saiyān</i>) brought forth four angels (<i>fīrastā</i>); Upon his command, they brought clay and he fashioned the figure of man.	3
Beholding the angels, the clay began to tremble; Indeed, O Beloved Lord! The clay began to weep!	4
My Beloved Lord, the Shāh, commanded: "Weep not, O Clay!" Water was brought, and the Beloved Lord kneaded [the clay] with yeast.	5
Having kneaded it with yeast, the Beloved Lord made the body of man; Then, from the seventh heaven he ordered a soul (<i>ruh</i>) for it.	6
Infusing the soul into the body, the Beloved Lord said: "This is your dwelling!" The soul looked up, and it saw only darkness ahead.	7
"No my Beloved Lord, I do not want to go in there!" The Beloved Lord said: "As I have confined you, so I can set you free."	8
The soul then made this promise to the King (<i>rājā</i>); Give the tithe (<i>dasonḍ</i>), O Brother—religion (<i>dharmā</i>) will rescue you.	9
When the man was born into the world, he became neglectful; Thus, whatever he earned in the world was surely a waste.	10
Gaining only limited merit, the man's time was up; Like the lamp whose wick goes out, so did the man's life.	11
His brothers came together and built him a case; They fetched some water and sprinkled it on the man's body.	12
They draped the man's limbs in the finest of garments; Having thus covered him, they returned to their homes.	13
They brought the man his favourite foods; His maternal family came and began to strap the man's thighs.	14
The angels took account of all the good deeds of the man; The dwelling of the Sāheb was in a land far off.	15
Swāmī Rājā bestows blissful Paradise (<i>bahīṣṭā</i>) to all the true ones; This essence-filled wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) has been recited by Pīr Shams.	16



Listen, O Brothers, O Believers (<i>mu'min</i>)! The final age of <i>kalyug</i> has come.	1
We have sat around for many days—now the last ones have arrived.	2
If you can think, reflect upon this, O Brothers, O Believers!	3
Be steadfast in religious practices (<i>niyam</i>) and earn abundant profits.	4
The turn of 'Alī Shāh has come in whose religion (<i>dīn</i>) there are multitudes.	5
The Swāmī Rājā will demand an account so keep your mind (<i>jīv</i>) resolute.	6
Without the Pīr, there is no heaven (<i>bahīsta</i>)— know this for sure, O Brother!	7
Listen to what the Pīr says, O Brothers, and always bear it in mind.	8
Night and day, O Brothers, recite the <i>japa</i> and realise the Creator's word (<i>śabda</i>).	9
On clear ground, sit all of you in union and together dwell upon it.	10
'Alī Shāh's boat is indeed blessed and has unlimited places in it.	11
Whoever clambers into this boat, he too becomes one of us.	12
When the vision (<i>darśan</i>) of 'Alī Shāh is attained, the mind will frolic in joy.	13
A believer of the True Path (<i>satpanth</i>) knows the religious precepts (<i>ācār</i>).	14
One whose heart has no religion (<i>dharma</i>), surely that one is a fake.	15
Pīr Shams relates the facts as they are—know that they are the truth (<i>sāc</i>)!	16



O Brother! You came from a place on high, why dwell upon the low?
O Comrade! Your stay is but four days long, why accumulate untruth?
What kind of fruit can sin yield, yes indeed, what type of fruit?

(Refrain)

O Fellow, let your arrogance not delude you—walk humbly and die!
Beg for the Messenger's (*rasūl*) intercession, for the Prophet's (*nabī*) mercy!
O Brother, fear evil, yes indeed, be fearful of falsehood!
Let your arrogance not lead you astray—walk humbly and die! 1

O Brother! You came [into the world] naked, you will go back under covers!
What you gain in one moment, why must you lose it in the next?
Why commit sin and depart from True Religion (*satdharma*)? O Fellow..... 2

Those who discard religion(*dīn*) and engage in disputes;
Those who shun the path and stand with the sinners (*pāpī*);
By their own doing, their souls have fallen into hell (*dozakḥ*). O Fellow..... 3

Only those brave few will persist in fulfilling this path (*panth*);
The Prophet Muḥammed related that which he himself had witnessed;
Pīr Shams preaches the true knowledge (*‘ilm*). O Fellow.... 4



The Pir came, yes he came, hey Allah, he came! From Anala he came to the city of Ghazni, O Allah!	1
Strolling, he wandered about the city, hey Allah, he wandered! Emnā invited him to rest at her home, O Allah!	2
We will fetch different kinds of grapes [for you], hey Allah! And thrash pippal leaves near the water-well, O Allah!	3
The earthen pot was raw and so was its string, hey Allah! Yet she went to the well to fetch some water, O Allah!	4
My pot did not burst nor did my string break, hey Allah! Pir Shams is in my house as my guest, O Allah!	5
My pot did not burst nor did my string break, hey Allah! Emnā, that is due to your faith (<i>dharma</i>), O Allah!	6
Listen, O Sister-in-law, please listen my sister-in-law, hey Allah! I will give you the two gold bangles on my wrist, O Allah!	7
To hell with your gold-minted bracelets, hey Allah! My little tongue twitches with intrigue, O Allah!	8
Listen, O Mother! You my dear Mother, listen to me, hey Allah! Emnā has brought impurity upon our house, O Allah!	9
Listen, O son Hariścandra! Listen son Hariścandra, hey Allah! Throw Emnā out, [yes throw her out], O Allah!	10
With Hural in her arms and Kuramal ¹ at her side, hey Allah! Emnā was driven out, [yes she was thrown out], O Allah!	11
With a bit of corn in the fold of her <i>sāri</i> , a mere handful, hey Allah! She left along with her roasting oven, O Allah!	12
Baking and roasting, the corn began to jump and pop, hey Allah! O Emnā, this is due to the strength of your faith, O Allah!	13
The dry lake swelled and heaved, splashing waves of water, hey Allah! When her lovely children cried out in thirst, O Allah!	14
The dry lake swelled and heaved, splashing waves of water, hey Allah! O Emnā, that was due to your [steadfast] faith, O Allah!	15
Pir Shams said, Listen, O Brothers, O Believers (<i>mu'min</i>), hey Allah! Emnā was thus triumphant over Kulicanda, O Allah!	16

¹ Her two children.



- Hear, O Brother! Listen, O Friend! If you want profit, gain it here!
O Friend, give your heart some wisdom, yes [enlighten] yourself. 1
- Hear, O Brother! Listen, O Friend! Give up your heart here sincerely;
O Friend, be like the firebird¹ that attained the greatest heights. 2
- Hear, O Brother! Listen, O Friend! Spread religion (*dīn*) while you are here;
O Friend, be like Vimras, yes, your brother believer (*mu'min*) Vimras. 3
- Hear, O Brother! Listen, O Friend! What did he do for his own sake!
O Friend, he cut off his head and sacrificed it, yes, he chopped his head off. 4
- Hear, O Brother! Listen, O Friend! Crush all the mind's desires here.
O Friend, then you will attain the Immortal City (*amarāpurī*), yes, the Immortal City. 5
- Hear, O Brother! Listen, O Friend! This body is but a stranger;
O Friend, you will leave it in a couple of days, yes, in a couple of days. 6
- Hear, O Brother! Listen, O Friend! Put your foot here and follow [me]!
O Friend, be like the camel who obeys the string, yes, that tugs at its nose-ring. 7
- Hear, O Brother! Listen, O Friend! Fall into line here and walk!
O Friend, walk along the path on which the Guru leads the believers, yes, walk. 8
- Hear, O Brother! Listen, O Friend! Pay heed to these words (*śabda*) in this lifetime!
O Friend, Pīr Shams recites a prayer (*vinantī*), yes O Believers, a supplication! 9

¹ anala pañkhī: Allusion to an imaginary bird that caught fire as it approached heaven and from whose ashes a new bird was born.



Westward in the land of Irāq in the peninsula of Svetadvīpa
A decorated home welcomes you with many colourful delights!
That is where my dear Master (*dhanī*) reigns.

Refrain:

Flee! Flee, O demon Kaliṅga! My Master (*dhanī*) is coming from the West (*paścim*).
Ninety battalions will be crushed just under his horse's shoe!
Alas! When your army is conquered before your very own face,
Who will rescue you then, I do not know. 1

From the West will beat the claps of many drums –
They will beat to signal the thunders of war!
My Shāh will cry out his orders across the three worlds (*tribhovan*);
They will instantly herald him as the Sultān. 2

Harken! Horses vigorous in step and chariots the speed of wind!
And elephants all beautifully decked out for the Shāh.
Wielding thirty-six weapons, the man who is Nakalaṅkī, will mount,
And in fourteen worlds will resound the hail: Victory! Victory! 3

Witness the nine Nāths, the eighty-four Siddhas,
And the different types of Jogīs. They will all cry, Bravo! Bravo!
Ajiyā and Vajiyā will wave the great leather fans,
And Prince Kamalā will wear the crown on his head. 4

The trumpets and conch-shells will blow many a sound,
And the nine continents will fall into destruction.
Hundred thousand brave will march on the path of my Shāh.
In this manner will they forge ahead. 5

O Queen! I have three times as many forts all in splendid shape!
Indeed, within their walls the gods (*devatā*) earn their living.
The god of torrential rain-clouds replenishes my water-well,
And the sun-god fuels the cooking pots in my kitchen. 6

O King! What! Are you going to contest and challenge Him?
Him, the Protector (*dātār*) of the souls (*jīva*) of three worlds?
Him, the Master (*swāmī*) of the fourteen realms?
Better that you serve (*sevā*) Him and gain [salvation]! 7

O Queen! I, who can revive the dead and who reveres our ancestors (*pitṛ*)!
I, who can feed straw to wooden horses! [I should serve Him?]
My army has more than a million strong, nay it is infinite in numbers.
By contrast, a trifle indeed is the army of your Shāh! 8

O King! So you can revive the dead and you revere the ancestors!
But your battalions—they are naive, inexperienced!



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- When my Shāh mounts before their eyes and performs the awesome,
The true and pure amongst them will stand transfixed. 9
- O Queen! You eat, drink and make merry at the expense of my wealth.
And then you dare to swear, "My Shāh is this and my Shāh is that!"
Oh! Is there such a one here in this city of Cīnab
Who can bring my Queen Surjādevī back to her senses? 10
- O King! For ages and ages I have kept on telling you
That you, O Kaliṅga, have been performing evil deeds!
You paid no heed in the three ages that have passed;
But now, in this fourth one, the Sāheb will take account. 11
- O Queen! Go tell this talk of yours to your dear Lord (*deva*)!
Listen to me, O Queen Surjādevī!
You live and reside in my city –
Yet you dare to speak to me about some foreigner? 12
- The demon (*daitya*) climbed his mount and his troops fell into sequence
There in the city of Cīnab.
Then, the Lord Brahmā descended;
Presently, He is the tenth *avatār*. 13
- O King! My Shāh will take account of each and every grain,
And upon it the Satgur will put his seal!
By the grace of the Lord (*nara*), Pir Shams said,
The Shāh will give sovereignty to the pious (*rīkhīsar*). 14



One who can cradle mountains in a hand and swallow the sea in a gulp;
O Brother, even one as powerful as this returns to clay—
So of what use is your arrogance?

Refrain

O negligent Brother! Each moment do worship, for the world will pass!
O miserly Brother! Each moment do worship, for this world will pass! 1

O Brother! Beware not to put off till tomorrow what must be done today!
[For, when death strikes], not even an eye can blink—
And the morsel of food, it remains uneaten in the mouth. 2

O Brother! Those in whose company you merrily talked, [when death came]
Not a moment longer did you let them linger. On your shoulders you carried them.
O Brother, you buried them and turned them over to the grave. 3

O Brother! Queen Tārā had all her heart's desire;
Indeed, she displayed around her neck jewels worth nine million! But alas!
In the town square of Kāśī, King Hariścandra had to sell his own wife. 4

Pir Shams, the Generous Guru, uttered this wisdom (*ginān*)!
O Shāh! Ferry all those [present] to the other shore (*pār*).
O Believers (*mu'min*), if you give the tithe (*dasand*), you will attain the other shore. 5



Pir Shams says, Listen, O Brothers! Listen, O Believers!
I am telling a tale concerning beginningless beginnings!
Thirty-six ages (*yug*) of eighty-four times four,
Fourteen years of eighteen hours, [this long time ago]—
My Shāh exclaimed the sacred syllable “aum”!
Lo! The dark depths of the sky bear witness to this. 1

Countless aeons had already gone by before that,
Aeons whose magnitude no one can fathom.
Then, the Unique Nirañjan was totally alone,
And there were no sacred words of the Vedas. 2

When God (*ḵhudāvand*) cried out, “So be it!”
He summoned the Pir close to Him.
O Brothers, O Believers (*muʿmin*), listen to this account!
I tell only what I have experienced first-hand. 3

In the seventeenth age at the twenty-fourth hour,
The Shāh lifted an egg and held it.
My Sāheb exclaimed: “See how I create!” 4

Whereupon he burst the egg and made earth and sky!
Next he fashioned wind and water;
In a wink, he created in pairs, eighty-four lakh souls (*jīv*)!
Such is the majesty of my Sāheb. 5

He gave birth to the speech of sixteen castes;
Sāheb guided each and every soul to our path.
The Lord (*ḵhudāvand*) gave four messages,
Listen, O you pious (*munivar*) Brothers! 6

The earth and sky heard the first message
And thus earth and sky became fixed.
The seven tops readily lifted up into place,
Just with a single glance from my Sāheb. 7

When the Sāheb turned his sight towards the earth and sky,
He derived satisfaction from His creation.
The second message was heard by the earth;
It came into the hands of the Hindus. 8

The Hindus worshipped (*pūjā*) stones and made offerings to them;
They fashioned idols (*mūrti*) and established them.
They heard the message but fathomed not its secret;
And thus lost the profits of this life. 9

Worshipping stones has no meaning, no value.
Listen to me, O my pious Brothers!



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- The secret (*bhed*) of the third message became manifest;
That magic appeared in the Qurʾān. 10
- They read the Qurʾān but they did not comprehend it;
They did not realise its inner secrets.
What the Veda says is all true,
But to abide by it is a difficult task. 11
- The Lord (*kḥudāvand*) then gave the fourth message,
This time it was sent through the Pīr's, the Guru's mouth.
The Atharva Veda became manifest through him,
Listen all of you, O my pious Brothers! 12
- The fourth age (*kalyug*) will turn out to be rough times;
Those who lie are celebrated and glorified,
While there is no place for the modest!
Alas! the ignoble stand at the entrances of power. 13
- Donkeys will bear burdens meant for elephants,
Pīr Shams, the Satgur, predicts this very thing.
You will encounter much slander and back-biting,
People will come together just to boast. 14
- The upright will be called wicked,
And the wicked will be paid great respect.
But ultimately, truth will be victorious,
So Pīr Shams has said. 15
- indeed, [severe] punishment awaits the deceivers,
When the end of time (*ākḥira*) arrives.
Sāheb will shout to the sun,
And it will begin to approach, O Brother. 16
- You will see it then, the hundred-eyed sun,
Once Allah has issued His command (*fīrmān*).
Those creatures who were up to playing their tricks,
They will stand up and weep. 17
- The Shāh who is Mawlā will himself be the judge (*qāḍī*);
He is the Sāheb who sustains the nine-continents by his sight.
They will plead to him, "O our Shāh, O our Shāh!"
But he will hear no one, says Pīr Shams. 18
- The Pīrs and Messengers (*paygambar*) will stand trembling,
No plea at all may they put before the Sāheb.
The Sāheb's robes will begin to shine with a dazzling Light (*ḥyoti*),
Thus relates Pīr Shams. 19
- When the Sāheb examines their sins and their merits,
The earth and the sky will begin to shake, O Brother!
God will ask for an accounting of each and every particle,
Listen to me, O you my pious Brothers! 20



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He will set the evil-doers apart,
Yielding the faithful under the care of my 'Alī.
Pīr Shams Qalandar said this:
O God! None can comprehend your infinitude. 21

Blessed souls will indeed live in Paradise (*bahīṣṭa*) itself,
That is, those who win the favour of Pīr Shams.
Pīr Shams says, listen, O Brothers, O Believers!
I have told you a tale about beginningless beginnings. 22



O Brother Believers (<i>mu'min</i>)! Listen to a story of bizarre times! Kalyug, the age of iniquity, has come.	1
Disciples (<i>murīd</i>) will fight with their spiritual masters (<i>pīr</i>), Sons will beat up their fathers.	2
Be intelligent and clever, O Brother Believers, beware! The last [moment] comes close.	3
The times of the last age (<i>kalyug</i>) are troublesome, my brothers; Those who tell lies gain in popularity.	4
Thus, the honest too will abandon truth; Ripened fruits will get parched and dry up.	5
No rainwater will fall from the sky; No crops will flourish upon the earth.	6
Mother and daughter will quarrel together; Each will swear that the other is a step-wife.	7
Though they eat, drink and sleep together, Friends will turn into each others' foes.	8
The mother-in-law will rise to fetch drinking water, While the daughter-in-law sits and eats her meal.	9
The master will be oppressed by his servant; Old man, times such as these will come!	10
Two brothers will fight one another, They will tear each other apart.	11
Wives will batter their husbands, Old man, see the spectacle before your very own eyes!	12
Hindus and Muslims will meet each other, They will sit and eat their meals together.	13
Mullahs and brahmins will join to slaughter cows; At every turn they will fight and quarrel.	14
Calamity will befall the heads of the destitute, Yet [the rich] will clutch at their own wealth.	15
Know this is Kalyug, such are the times; Old man, such [terrible] times have arrived.	16
Rare indeed will be that pious ascetic, Who leaves home when there is a squabble.	17



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Alas! There will be no place for the virtuous, And the corrupt will have positions in government.	18
When all is ablaze the rains will pour, Water will flood the earth everywhere.	19
One day, a cyclone of great force will burst forth, Mountains and hills will fly asunder.	20
Upon the head of the world will be sin, Old man, accordingly it will be judged.	21
These quarrelsome people have no idea What kind of judgment this will be.	22
Waters of the seven seas will drain away; And all water-life will perish.	23
Sun and moon, both will be hidden; There will be utter and complete darkness.	24
Forts will shake and their towers will topple over; The whole earth will be immersed in water.	25
In between the distance of two furlongs, Only one light will burn.	26
The entire world will be destroyed, No one will remain upon it.	27
Only the people of Allah will remain; There will be only one God.	28
As near as the span of a hand Is the kingdom of our Sāheb.	29
Pīr Shams Qalandar related all this About the amazing powers of our Sāheb.	30



You are the Truth (<i>haqq</i>) , you the Holy (<i>pāk</i>), the Sovereign (<i>bādshāh</i>)! O ‘Alī! Indeed, you alone are the Benevolent (<i>meharbān</i>)!	1
You are the Lord (<i>rabb</i>) ! You are the Merciful (<i>rehmān</i>)! O ‘Alī! Indeed, you alone are the first and final Judge (<i>qāḍī</i>)!	2
You orginated and you brought forth! O ‘Alī! Indeed, you alone are the Creator (<i>ṣirjaṇhār</i>)!	3
Maker of water and earth, the roots of Creation, O ‘Alī! Indeed, yours alone is the [final] command (<i>hukam</i>)!	4
Pīr Shams speaks out love for you; O ‘Alī! Indeed! I am your devoted servant (<i>bando</i>)!	5



Understand as truth (<i>sāc</i>) the sacred speech (<i>veda-vacan</i>) of the Guru! Without the truth, he will not come, but the wicked do not understand him.	1
The wicked do not find the Shāh whereas the upright recognise the Satgur; Keep the sacred speech of the Satgur fixed firmly in the heart.	2
They heed not what the Guru says nor believe anybody else's word; They will remain alone and abandoned, deprived of the Guru's company.	3
The assembly (<i>jamā'at</i>) sets up the water-pot (<i>ghaṭ</i>) and numerous folk congregate; Only few recognise the Lord (<i>nara</i>)—the rest are engrossed in worldly affairs.	4
All meet their family and friends remaining oblivious to matters concerning Truth(<i>sat</i>); All drink holy water (<i>pāval</i>), but none realise the Guru's essence (<i>dhāt</i>).	5
Few understand the <i>ghaṭ</i> ceremony and the stature of the water-pot; The virgin of the universe ¹ will drink it and wed Śyāma, Lord of three worlds.	6
She is called Bibī Fāṭimah—know that she is the virgin of the universe; Pir Shams says: the <i>ghaṭ</i> was established by the order (<i>firmān</i>) of the Shāh.	7

¹ viśva-kumvārī: lit. virgin of the universe.



- When the *ghaṭ* is established there is religion (*dharma*) and no other name is taken;
The world will then fill with Light and [you will] attain the ranks of the immortal. 1
- ¹For the sake of the True Religion (*sat dharma*), Draupadī endured suffering;
She did not surrender her chastity, and thus she acquired every happiness (*sukha*). 2
- The *satī* did not forsake her purity and her hero came to meet her;
She fixed her concentration [upon him] when the devil tried to disrobe her. 3
- None is senior to Draupadī for whom posterity may claim such great praise;
But today whoever performs the *ghaṭ* ceremony, know that one to be a *satī*. 4
- Various gods (*deva*) and spirits (*yakṣa*) preside—Vimras and Surbhāṇ too are present;
Such times have come to pass today, but no one knows it. 5
- The *Medha* deities await him whose stay is in *kalyug* ;
In that pot (*kumbha*) is the holy water (*pāval*)²—we brought it one night . 6
- Twenty-three million *Kinnar* deities come to practice the religion (*dharma*);
They too come with this intention,³ says Pīr Shams. 7

¹ Note vs. 2-7 are repeated in Ginān # 65.

² Note that the holy water is either called *niyam* or *pāval*. *niyam* may be related to Guj. *nīm* – a religious vow, custom or rule or Hin. *niyāmat* – blessing, boon, bounty; also see Hin. *niyam* – rule, law. *pāval* may be connected with the Guj. verb *pāvun* – to drink or cause to drink; Guj. *pāvan* – pure, sacred or santifying; or to the Guj. *pāvāl* – an old silver coin (coins are offered during the *ghaṭ* ceremony); or perhaps to the Guj. *pyālī* – a small cup (in which the holy water is served).

³ That is, to partake in the *ghaṭ* ceremony.



- Shāh, Lord of three worlds (*tribhavar*), will marry the virgin of the universe;
On that day will the *ghaṭ* be established and the deceitful will not come near. 1
- Concentrate upon the Omniscient! Our dwelling is in this world (*saṃsār*);
Recognise Vimras and Surbhāṇ—they are our disciples (*dāsa*). 2
- Our disciples have been with us, indeed since time immemorial;
These devotees (*bhakta*) will come to the world in *Kalyug*—know this for certain. 3
- Where the *ghaṭ* ceremony takes place, incense will be passed around;
Many lamps will be lit and there we will make our dwelling. 4
- In *Kalyug* many will perform the rite of the holy water (*amṛta*) in the pot (*kumbha*);
But only where my devotees (*bhakta*) are present will it be fully established. 5
- Where such a *ghaṭ* is established and devotees perform their devotions,
Pir Shams says, there they will attain the abode of heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*). 6



In the scripture (<i>veda</i>), it is written thus: Know that in the city of Cīnab Everybody lives there and so indeed does Queen Surjādevī.	1
Queen Surjādevī practices recollection (<i>smaraṇa</i>) and serves at the Guru's feet; Everyone performs the <i>ghaṭ</i> ceremony and all go to drink holy water (<i>pāval</i>).	2
Thirty-three million gods (<i>devatā</i>) dwell in this world of rebirth (<i>saṃsār</i>); Among them are Vimras and Surbhāṇ but no one recognises them.	3
All of them, both the gods (<i>deva</i>) and the devils (<i>dāṇava</i>), inhabit human bodies; Just as you recognise the worldly, [try to] distinguish them from the crowd.	4
Call those souls (<i>jīva</i>) true in whom there is no impurity; They who live reflecting upon the Guru's wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) will see the sham.	5
In this world of rebirth (<i>saṃsār</i>), they construct games from which there is no refuge; They speak and act one thing and then go and commit evil deeds.	6
Those who behold our scripture (<i>veda</i>) and step with the right foot; They will attain the company of the Guru says Pīr Shams.	7

¹ See Jodilo_6, vss. 7-13.



56¹

Do not cherish the world; instead, foster love for religion (<i>dīn</i>); The world lasts but four days so why not surrender oneself to religion?	1
In this world of rebirth (<i>saṃsār</i>), be single-minded and be not deceived; Perform the true <i>japa</i> and austerities (<i>tapa</i>) and you will join the Sāheb.	2
Realise the temple is in the mind and indeed in the mind is the Lord (<i>deva</i>); Perform the rite of <i>kumbha</i> ² in the mind and surely you will meet the Satgur.	3
Construct a plain tent and make your dwelling within it; There the pure and chaste (<i>satī</i>) should congregate and fulfil their heart's desire.	4
They are the pure and noble whose concentration (<i>dhyāna</i>) is fixed on the Sāheb; They are the truly pure (<i>satī</i>) whose minds and hearts are blissful.	5
All their hopes are fulfilled and the Guru's words (<i>vāc</i>) come true; Their desires come to pass—they are living proofs for the world.	6
Man and woman are one and the same though their bodies are distinct; All walk and talk alike, and those on the path of religion (<i>dharma</i>) are equal.	7
Attain the permanent kingdom (<i>rāj</i>) by repeating the <i>japa</i> with single mind; Then ahead will you gain kingship (<i>bādashāhī</i>), Guru Shams says so himself.	8

¹ See *Iodilo* 7, vss 1-7.

² lit. the vessel; that is, the *ghaṭ* ceremony.



O Brother! The True Path (<i>satpanth</i>) that you have taken—stray not from it; Take in the Light (<i>nūr</i>) and speak no falsehood with your mouth.	1
He who created [all things] and He who brought them forth; Alas, not for even a moment have you paid heed to that Sāheb.	2
Forever saying, “Mine, it is mine,” you have squandered away your life; This priceless ¹ form of humankind, you have debased it.	3
Come hither, O my merchants of pearls! Trading in pearls, yet you have missed the most precious thing.	4
The world is mistaken, it knows not the real essence; It recognises not the Imām, the matchless Nirañjan.	5
Pīr Shams’ advice is to conduct yourselves carefully! For when you are reborn again, you may not gain the human form.	6
This body of yours is like a bunch of flowers; There is no way to rescue it [from withering away].	7
Having seen the true authority, give charity (<i>dāna</i>) and do good deeds (<i>puṇya</i>)! O Brother! Reap the fruits of worship (<i>pūjā</i>) [whilst you can].	8
O Brother! Give charity and do good with your own hands; At the end of time (<i>antakāla</i>), this [merit] will accompany your soul (<i>jīv</i>).	9
Pīr Shams has spoken such wisdom (<i>ginān</i>); Identifying the pious ones (<i>rikhīsar</i>), the Sāheb withdrew the curtain.	10
With curtains withdrawn, their eyes met those of the Sāheb; Whereupon their eighty-four lakh ² cycles of rebirth (<i>ferā</i>) dissolved!	11

¹ lit. a form that is as precious as a gem.
² One lakh is one hundred thousand.



O Ascetic!² Make the world your sack, satisfaction your bowl!
Let discernment be your rod!
Don the earrings of humility and kindness!
Let wisdom (*ginān*) be your sustenance.

Refrain

O Ascetic! He in this world is a *jogī* in whose mind is no other [save God]. 1

O Ascetic! Knowledge (*ginān*) is my Guru,
Renounce the senses and apply ash!³
Believing in its truth (*sat*), meditate on the True Religion (*sat dharma*)!
Then ascetic you are a real *jogī*. 2

O Ascetic! With concentration as your rod,
Still the mind and arrest the moon and sun!⁴
Then will the *suṣumaṇā* string begin to play,
Such a mystery is the portion of but a few. 3

O Ascetic! Abandon all your sins—
Bathe in the crossing of the three rivers (*trivenī*)
And strike up the the unstruck sound (*anāhata nāda*);
Pir Shams says: Die when still alive and you will not be reborn. 4

1 See *Ginān* # 78 which is identical. Perhaps a printing error.

2 *abadhu*: Guj. *avadhūta* – ascetic, renunciate

3 *bhabhūṭā*: Guj. *bhabhūṭī* – sacred ash, ash from sacrificial fire; cf. Hin. *vibhūti*.

4 Symbols in Tantric meditation and Kuṇḍalinī yoga.



The golden-maned lion forgot his own true form;
Keeping the company of sheep, he became as a lamb.
Under such a delusion, he left behind his own life.
O Brother! Banish all your delusions and repeat, “‘Alī, ‘Alī.”

Refrain

‘Alī is present and ‘Alī will always be!
Hold fast to this assurance in your heart,
Yes indeed! Hold fast to this pledge in your heart!
O Brother! Banish all your delusions and repeat, “‘Alī, ‘Alī.”

1

If he crushed his illusion, the lion would come to his senses;
His heart would be rid of its sheep-like qualities,
And never again would he slumber under such an illusion.
O Brother! Banish all your delusions and repeat, “‘Alī, ‘Alī.”

2

All souls (*jīv*) have come and fallen into ignorance (*avidyā*);
In their egoism, they have lost the Beloved by their own doing;
They came [into the world] suddenly, yet they act arrogantly.
O Brother! Banish all your delusions and repeat, “‘Alī, ‘Alī.”

3

If you keep the company of the Perfect Man (*murshid al-kāmil*),
When ignorance approaches, it will be dispelled;
Then will you realise matters concerning the heart.
O Brother! Banish all your delusions and repeat, “‘Alī, ‘Alī.”

4

If you conquer delusion you will recognise the Beloved (*saiyān*);
O Believer (*mu‘min*), recognise your true self by yourself!
Pīr Shams says you should practice this.
O Brother! Banish all your delusions and repeat, “‘Alī, ‘Alī.”

5



60
(Joḍilo No. 1)

- Take the rosary in your hand and [repeat] the *japa* of Pīr Shāh;
If you truly realise both the Guru and Nara, you will attain Heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*). 1
- Do not chat at the place of prayer, and be upright in your conduct;
Keep such piety and calm that the world (*saṃsār*) does not notice you. 2
- Live purely in the world, and harbour affection (*sneha*) for the Satgur;
Consider yourself to be nothing, and you will attain the highest form. 3
- Never depart from your affection—love (*prīta*) the Satgur profusely;
Gossip not in the congregation (*gat*), and reach the supreme station. 4
- Ponder upon the Guru's wisdom (*ginān*), and you will gain understanding (*bodha*);
The soul that keeps its promise (*kol*) will reach the other shore (*pahēle pār*). 5
- Establish the rite of *ghaṭ pāṭh* where thirty-three million deities (*devatā*) will attend;
Practice religion (*dharma*) purely and you will attain the Immortal City (*amarāpurī*). 6
- Distribute holy water (*niyam*) to the gathering and converse together quietly;
If you let doubts enter the mind, you will not attain the Eternal (*ananta*). 7
- The water symbolizes Light (*nūr*); at every chance take the food-offering (*sukrita*);¹
Drinking holy water purges impurity—else there is no release (*mokṣa*) at death. 8
- The water in the vessel (*kumbha*) is from Light and brings forth more Light (*nūr*);
Fools do not know this secret—they remain engulfed in the world of rebirth. 9
- When in the gathering the *ghaṭ* is established by invoking the Guru's name,
Whoever drinks this *niyam* with love will attain the place of Immortality. 10
- In Light (*nūr*) resides Light and only the Satgur has knowledge of it;
Chaste (*satī*) Ansūyā clasped her hands whereupon Devadutta was born. 11
- Pīr Shams said whoever performs the ceremony of *ghaṭ pāṭh*,
Whoever establishes the pot (*ghaṭ*) is indeed a true believer (*mu'min*). 12

¹ sukarita: a term used for the *prasāda* or food-offering made of wheat-flour, ghee, sugar, milk and holy-water served at the end of this ceremony to symbolize the doing of good deeds, that is, *su-krita*.



61
(Joḍilo No. 2)

Perform daily the worship (<i>pūjā</i>) of <i>ghaṭ</i> and keep all the vows (<i>vrata</i>); He who drinks <i>pāval</i> invoking the Guru's name will reach the other shore.	1
Observe the vow of <i>bij</i> ¹ and this too when it is a Friday; Bring along some <i>sukrita</i> ² and perform the religious ceremonies.	2
The <i>ghaṭ</i> should be set up by one whose vision is pure; All will be absolved of sin (<i>pāp</i>) and all will witness the Immortal (<i>amar</i>) home.	3
Whoever concentrates on religion (<i>dharma</i>) will attain the boon of Immortality; At home is your other half—regard all other [people] as your brother or sister.	4
Whoever walks on the True Path (<i>satmārga</i>) and recoils from back-biters; Whoever treats others with humility is indeed our devotee (<i>dāsa</i>).	5
Whoever remains absorbed in truth (<i>sat</i>) and gossips not about others; Whoever walks firm on one's own path will enter our company.	6
Wherever our Light (<i>nūr</i>) is spread and we are known with true faith (<i>viśvās</i>); Make there a quiet gathering (<i>gat</i>) and converse about the Satgur.	7
Whoever listens to our teaching (<i>veda</i>) and understands all that is said; Whoever practices self-restraint—that one is in our company.	8
Offer a coin or two and submit it into the hands of the gathering; With hands clasped, stand before the congregation (<i>gatjamā'at</i>).	9
The gathering will offer blessings (<i>āśiṣa</i>) so stand in its midst; To be relieved of tribulations, submit yourselves as sincere devotees.	10
If you follow our orders (<i>fīrmān</i>), you will attain the Immortal city (<i>amarāpurī</i>); There you will gain endless happiness and the protection of the Lord (<i>nara</i>).	11
Pīr Shams says: Know this to be the real truth! Be certain that thus will you attain the rank of Immortality.	12

¹ A fast to be observed on the second day of the new moon called *cāndrāl*.
² See *Ginān* # 60, note 1.



62
(Joḍilo No. 3)

- If you walk on the True Path (*satmāṛṡa*), you will attain the secret essence (*sār*);
If you study¹ the Guru's wisdom (*ginān*), understanding will deliver you. 1
- Those who observe not our advice (*firmān*), who believe not in our words;
They will attain a place nowhere nor will they attain the Gurunara's support. 2
- Those lacking understanding are like stones—do not grieve² after them;
Those who follow not the Satgur's words, how will they become immortal (*amar*)? 3
- Keep a stone in water and let a whole year pass by,
Yet when you [finally] remove it, it will still not be moist within. 4
- Those whose hearts remain untouched³ by the Guru's wisdom (*ginān*), who grasp it not;
Even had you taught them for six months, know them to be like stones. 5
- For ten months when they were in the womb, they rendered much service (*sevā*);
But once born, they became greedy and none reached the other shore (*pār*). 6
- These words of wisdom (*ginān*) are from us—whoever bears their essence in the heart,
Know that one is our devotee (*bhakta*)! Such wise ones (*gyānī*) reach the other shore. 7
- The pearl is brought forth from a mere shell yet, indeed, it is a priceless gem;
Know that the devotees are as precious [as pearls]—and none can equal their worth. 8
- Who knows well the Guru's wisdom (*ginān*) and keeps the self steadfast;
The Lord (*deva*) dwells in such persons and their bodies become Immortal. 9
- Keeping in heart the Guru's wisdom, the devotee (*dāsa*) contemplates the Name (*nām*);
Wherever s/he comes and goes, there the Gurunar is nearby. 10
- Vimras and Surbhāṇ became manifest; and they came into the fourth age of *Kali*;
Pir Shams the Satgur says that they entered the world of rebirth (*saṁsār*). 11

1 vāñciye: Guj. *vāñcvuṇi* – to read.
2 lit. beat one's chest.
3 lit. moistened, made wet.



- Birth after birth they became manifest in the form of true devotees (*bhakta*);
Assuming human form (*rūpa*), they went on to dwell in Heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*). 1
- Whoever keeps the mind fixed on the Guru's words and becomes truly devoted,
Know for sure—among humankind, such a person is indeed divine (*devatā*). 2
- Thus is a devotee (*bhakta*) born, that is, when one has understood the teachings (*veda*);
Without the sanction of the Satgur, whoever speaks is a deceiver. 3
- Only that minted gold coin is authentic which complies with the scripture (*śāstra*);
Without the seal of the Satgur, realise that all else is a forgery. 4
- Know as truth these teachings (*veda*) and reflect upon the Guru's knowledge (*ilm*);
If like a *satpanthī*¹ you walk upon the True Path, you will reach the other shore. 5
- This knowledge and scripture come from the Guru²—he utters this wisdom (*ginān*);
Whoever believes in it as the truth (*sat*), that person's endeavours will be fulfilled. 6
- Those who remain firm on the path of truth and keep a watch on their intentions;
For them the Satgur is ever-present—they surely reach the Immortal City (*amarāpurī*). 7
- The hidden religion (*gupta dharma*) is very difficult—indeed none knows its secrets,
Vimras and Surbhāṇ are devotees—the teachings (*veda*) declare their seal of authority. 8
- These words of teachings (*veda vacan*) are from the Guru—recognise them as the truth;
Without truth, [salvation] will not come; certainly no evil-doer will attain it. 9
- The evil-doer will not attain the Shāh—know that the latter is in fact the Satgur;
Keep these words of teaching, which are from the Guru, fixed in your heart. 10
- Those who believe not what the Guru says nor accept the message in his teachings,
Ultimately they will remain apart and will not attain the Guru's company. 11
- I, Pīr Shams, have arrived and am going to Ucc in Multān;
Pīr Shams himself says: Follow all of you the wisdom (*ginān*) of the Guru! 12

1 Follower of the true path.
2 lit. the Guru's face.



64
(Joḍilo No. 5)

- From there we came to Ucch and indeed we looked like poor mendicants (*faqīr*);
But Satgur came later on and he stayed outside [the city] of Multān. 1
- We came into Ucch and there we settled down;
Since the Satgur left, two-hundred and fifty years have passed. 2
- His devotees (*bhakta*) were Vimras and Surbhāṇ—they too came here;
They came to meet the Guru and fell prostrate at his feet. 3
- Where the assembly (*jamā'at*) performs the *ghaṭ*, many will attain the essence (*sār*);
But just a few will know the Light (*nūr*)—the rest are lost in worldly affairs. 4
- Meeting family and friends, they remain ignorant of matters concerning truth (*sat*);
All alike drink the holy water (*pāval*), but none realise the Guru's being (*dhāt*). 5
- Whatever we tell about religion (*dharma*) is a revelation of truth;
Many pious ones (*satī*) have come to us and we have forgiven them. 6
- Only the brave will know about the rite of *ghaṭ* named after the water-pot (*kumbha jal*);
The virgin of the universe drinks it and weds Śyām, Lord of the Three Worlds. 7
- She is called Bībī Fāṭimah—know that she is the virgin of the universe;
Says Pīr Shams with certitude: Establish the *ghaṭ* in this world of rebirth (*saṃsār*)! 8



- ¹For the sake of religion (*dharma*), Draupadī endured great suffering;
She did not give up her chastity and thus sacrificed all happiness.² 1
- The chaste lady (*satī*) yeilded not her purity and her hero came to meet her;
She held her concentration fixed [upon him] when the devil tried to disrobe her. 2
- None is superior to Draupadī whose virtues we can extol [in equal measure];
But today whoever performs the *ghaṭ* ceremony, know that one to be a *satī*. 3
- Various gods (*deva*) and spirits (*yakṣa*) preside—Vimras and Surbhāṇ too are present;
Such times have come to pass today but no one knows it. 4
- The *Medha* deities await him whose dwelling is in *Kalyug*;
In that pot (*kumbha*) is the holy water (*pāval*)—bring it to us one night.³ 5
- With twenty-three million *Kinnar* deities we spoke about religious practices;⁴
They too come and attend time and again for this very purpose.⁵ 6
- ⁶All this is written in the scripture (*veda*): Know that they reside in Cīnab city!
All of them are [his] servants and certainly they all dwell there. 7
- Queen Surjādevī practices recollection (*smaraṇa*) and serves at the Gurunara's feet;
She established this *ghaṭ* and all went to drink the holy water (*pāval*). 8
- Thirty-three million gods (*devatā*) dwell in this world of rebirth (*saṃsār*):
Among them are Vimras and Surbhāṇ, but no one recognises them. 9
- Everything dwells in the human body including both the gods and the devils;
Follow the True Religion (*satdharma*) and you will reach the other shore (*pahele pār*). 10
- Call those souls (*jīv*) true in whom there is no impurity;
They who live reflecting upon the Guru's wisdom (*ginān*) will see the sham. 11
- In this world of rebirth, they construct games from which there is no refuge;
They speak and pretend one thing and then go and commit evil deeds. 12
- Those who behold our scripture (*veda*) and step with the right foot;
Pīr Shams says they will be reunited and join Vimras and Surbhāṇ. 13

1 Cf. 53:2-7.

2 52:7 is translated "acquired every happiness": the difference is due to a mere vowel in gujerati, *malīyā* (to get) rather than *melīyā* (to leave).

3 Cf. 53:6 "we brought it...": *ame ālo* (we brought) versus *amne ālo* (bring to us)

4 Cf. 53:7 "come to practice.." *kare* (do, perform) versus *kahiye* (we tell, relate)

5 That is, to partake in the *ghaṭ* ceremony.

6 Cf. 55:1-7



66
(Joḍilo No. 7)¹

Do not cherish the world; instead, foster love for religion (<i>din</i>); The world lasts but four days so why not surrender oneself to religion?	1
In this world of rebirth (<i>samsār</i>), be single-minded and be not deceived; Perform the <i>japa</i> and the austerities (<i>tapa</i>) of truth (<i>sat</i>), and you will join the Sāheb.	2
² Fashion a temple (<i>mandir</i>) in your mind (<i>mana</i>) ³ and realise all things within it; Turn the beads of the mind's rosary, for mental worship is sublime.	3
Realise the temple is in the mind and indeed in the mind is the <i>ghaṭ</i> ; ⁴ Perform the rite of <i>kumbha</i> in the mind and surely you will meet the Satgur.	4
Construct a visible tent but let your [true] dwelling be the mind; ⁵ The pure and chaste (<i>satī</i>) will come together and fulfil their hearts' desire.	5
They are the pure and chaste whose concentration is fixed on the Sāheb; They are the truly chaste (<i>satī</i>) whose minds and hearts are blissful.	6
All their hopes are fulfilled and the Guru's words come true; Their desires come to pass—they are living proofs for the world.	7
Man and woman are one and the same although their bodies are different; All are equal on the path of religion (<i>dharmā</i>) and walk and talk alike.	8
⁶ Walk all on the True Path (<i>satmārga</i>)! Pīr Shams speaks with the stamp of authority; Submit the gift of tithe (<i>dasonḍ dān</i>) to the Guru and receive millions in return.	9

1 Cf. 56: 1-8; similar except for some variation in vocabulary.
2 This verse is not in Ginān # 56.
3 Often synonymous with heart.
4 Cf. 56:3, the word is deva.
5 Cf. 56:4, the word mana is absent and significantly alters the sentence.
6 This verse is completely different from the last verse of Ginān # 56.



67
(Joḍilo No. 8)

Pir Shams left. On the way, a group was making a pilgrimage (<i>tīrtha</i>); Three of them came to the Guru and prostrated themselves at his feet.	1
The first was a <i>Banyā</i> ¹ called Saṅgī, the second a brahmin called Devrām; The third was a <i>Golārāṇā</i> ² Devcand; they all converged on the town Godī Viloḍ.	2
They came to a halt at the outskirts and proceeded to wash themselves; Soon the two devotees (<i>bhakta</i>) Vimras and Surbhāṇ also arrived there.	3
As the devotees pumped up some water, a few drops splashed on Devrām; [He exclaimed:] "I am a brahmin and you two are Muslims. You have defiled me!"	4
Devrām went into the town [distracted] and many people gathered around him; All were Hindus—not a single one who lived there had a Muslim name.	5
All the people came together and said: "We will beat up the [two] Muslims!" "How dare they splash water on you!" The whole town had assembled there.	6
A man was sent to call for them and ask, "In whose company are you?" All agreed that they should be questioned once. "Let us hear their reply!"	7
The two children (<i>bālaka</i>) replied: "There is a Pīr who accompanies us." "We just came to wash up and a few drops of water were accidentally splashed."	8
So the people gathered together and went over to the Pīr; "These children splashed water on our brahmin! What is their caste (<i>jāti</i>)?"	9
Satgur Shams replied: "They are our devotees (<i>dāsa</i>)!" "So some drops splashed while they were washing. Why kick up such a fuss?"	10

¹ Caste name particularly associated with trade; from Guj. *vāṇiyo* – trader.
² Probably from the *śūdras* caste.



68
(Joḍilo No. 9)

In reply, the brahmin challenged: "So you are supposed to be a great Pīr?" "I will be purified only once I wash with water from the Ganges!"	1
Satgur Shams stood up and went to the outskirts [of the town]; From the earth, water sprang forth—water from the Ganges overflowed.	2
[The townfolk] bathed in it and came to prostrate at the feet of the Pīr; They went towards the Pīr's place and then came and sat in his house.	3
They sat in his house and said: "Swāmī, give us your word (<i>kol</i>)." "You are our Master (<i>prabhu</i>)! You are the Satgur!"	4
Devrām [the brahmin] came hurriedly: "O Guru! Please put your hand on my head!" "[Bless me] that I may follow your words! I am your servant (<i>dāsa</i>)."	5
The <i>Banyā</i> Sangjī came [and pleaded]: "O Swāmī, listen!" "O Swāmī, deliver us! We are at your mercy."	6
The <i>Rānogolo</i> ¹ came, he whose name was Devcand; Bowing, he fell prostrate and said: "O Gurujī, please fulfil our tasks."	7
All the pilgrims bathed together in the water of the Ganges; Then all the townsfolk went to bathe in it too.	8
After bathing, they all returned and sat in the town-square [saying]: "To perform such a pilgrimage (<i>tīrtha</i>) would have cost us thousands."	9
They all bowed at the Guru's feet and confessed everything to him; "Show us, O Swāmī, all about the fellowship of truth (<i>satsaṅga</i>)."	10
"Our devotees (<i>bhakta</i>) are models of wisdom (<i>ginān</i>)—they will teach you; They are Vimras and Surbhān; they will give you the fellowship of truth."	11
Satgur Shams said: "Know that they are our devotees (<i>bhakta</i>); They will preach to you the wisdom (<i>ginān</i>). Keep its meaning within!"	12

¹ Golorāṇā in the previous *ginān*.



69
(Joḍilo No. 10)

- They went to the devotees (*bhakta*) and they all began to ask questions;
“O Bhaktas! Teach us how we can free our souls from the perplexities of life.” 1
- The devotees recited *gināns* and they all heard about the True Path (*satpanth*);
They became happy and said: “Please hold more meetings (*saṅgat*) with us.” 2
- They all assembled together and resolved to begin the *ghaṭ* ceremony;
They established the water-pot (*kaḷaśa*) and all of them drank the holy water (*niyam.*). 3
- Vimras instructed them on precepts and vows (*vrata*); Surbhāṇ read the scriptures (*śāstra*);
Guru Shams fastened the bracelet¹ and all were assured of liberation (*nirvāṇa*). 4
- Shams spoke these words: “Give tithe (*dasonḍ*) and the gift of charity (*dān*);
You will attain Heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*) and be honored in the Immortal City (*amarāpurī*).” 5
- Promising this, the Guru left. Faith (*imān*) filled [the hearts of] the gathering;
Pir Shams departed in haste and returned to his place in the jungle. 6

¹ kāṅkana: lit. bangle, bracelet; like the thread-tying (*gaṇḍā bandhan*) ceremony between a *guru* and the *śiṣya* (disciple) when a vow of allegiance and loyalty to the guru is taken. The bracelet symbolizes that one is “tied” to the guru.



70
(Joḍilo No. 11)

- There the Guru imparted wisdom (*ginān*), and the pigeons pleaded profusely:
"O Guru! Show us how the soul (*jīv*) can be enlightened". 1
- Pīr Shams the Satgur is Light (*nūr*); he made them drink holy water (*niyam*);¹
The pigeons prostrated themselves at his feet and made many a supplication (*ardās*). 2
- They stood there on one foot—what a huge flock had gathered!
Blessing (*āśīṣa*) them, the Guru showed them the way. 3
- Fixing his sack on his back, the Guru told them the secret (*bhed*):
"Give the gift (*dān*) of the tithe (*dasonḍ*) and your sins will be erased." 4
- "Nine parts are your share, but the tenth portion² is ours;
Keep it aside, that portion which is our right." 5
- The tiny souls (*jīv*) were grateful and again he lifted his sack on his back;
"Go submit it (*dasonḍ*) at the time [of sunset] when the evening falls." 6
- When the Pīr gave this order (*fīrmān*), Vimras and Surbhāṇ were with him;
The Pīr then departed and from there proceeded along a barren path. 7
- He entered Mālwā, a region where beasts and tigers lived and roamed;
Intercepting his path, a tiger snarled a command: "Give us your flesh!" 8
- Satgur Shams replied: "O you, king of the jungle!
Leave me be on my own path and return to your forest." 9
- At that moment, a cow came and stood next to the Pīr;
The lion³ said: "I will take pity on you. Instead, I will eat the cow's flesh." 10
- Satgur Shams said: "Dare not take the name of one who stands besides me;
She is now under my protection (*śaraṇa*) and you may not feast upon her." 11
- The devotees (*bhakta*) began to recite wisdom (*ginān*) and the tiger listened quietly;
Faith (*īmān*) penetrated his heart and he gave up his claim on the cow. 12
- Resolving to give the tithe (*dasonḍ*), the lion ceased to frequent [a part of] the jungle;
"We will not go hunting in [that part of] the forest for our prey." 13
- Realisation filled the beast, for he had paid heed to the Guru's wisdom (*ginān*);
He attained Heaven (*vaikunṭha*) for making his offering (*dān*) before the Guru. 14
- Satgur Shams said: "Learn [a lesson] from such birds and beasts!
Whoever follows the Guru's words (*vacan*) today will truly be liberated (*nirvāṇa*)." 15

1 *nīm*: cf. Note 2, *Ginān* #53.

2 Namely, of what your own or earn.

3 The words tiger and lion are used interchangeably.



71
(Joḍilo No. 12)

Those who followed the Guru's words attained Heaven (<i>vaikuṇṭha</i>); Recognise our devotees (<i>bhakta</i>) for they are our servants (<i>dāsa</i>).	1
Fill the heart with submission (<i>dāsapaṇa</i>) and have full confidence (<i>viśvās</i>); Wherever you look you will see Pir Shams coming beside you.	2
Cultivate this kind of devotion (<i>bakti</i>) and perform your duties quietly; Perform the rite of <i>ghaṭ</i> and submit the offering (<i>dān</i>) to the Guru.	3
Vimras and Surbhāṇ performed the worship (<i>pūjā</i>)—they set up the <i>ghaṭ</i> stand; “What offering (<i>dān</i>) you wish to make, give it to these devotees (<i>bhakta</i>).”	4
Devotees have come since time immemorial to impart the Guru's wisdom (<i>ginān</i>); Today in <i>Kalyug</i> they have descended again to relate the Guru's wisdom.	5
Those who follow the Guru's wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) will come towards us; Their descendants ¹ will go to Heaven (<i>svarga</i>) and attain the Immortal City (<i>amarāpurī</i>).	6
Shams spoke these words: “Listen to the essence (<i>sār</i>), O my Devotees! We have roamed through foreign lands and twenty-four kingdoms.”	7
The devotees listened and then prostrated themselves before the Guru; “Your speech (<i>vāc</i>) is the truth (<i>sāc</i>); constancy (<i>avical</i>) is your name (<i>nām</i>).”	8
“For aeons (<i>kalpa</i>) you sported and today you have become manifest (<i>avatār</i>); Now, O Guru, show us all [that exists] in the twenty-four kingdoms!”	9
“O Guru! You played a trick and dressed up as a poor mendicant (<i>faqīr</i>); You stood up from there ² and began to roam through foreign lands.”	10
“You performed many a feat and you, O Guru, recited wisdom (<i>ginān</i>); You set up countless ³ tents where God's (<i>hari</i>) name was chanted.”	11
“You gave religion (<i>dharma</i>) to many ⁴ castes and your devotees set up the <i>ghaṭ</i> stand; You kept Vimras and Surbhāṇ with you—they are the true servants of Guru Shams.”	12

1 lit. seventy-one generations of descendants.
2 Not clear from where.
3 lit. seven and a half hundred thousand.
4 lit. eighteen.



They entered the country Bengāl ¹ where there was a feast of ascetics (<i>vairāgi</i>); They came and met Pīr Shams, and the Guru began to recite verses.	1
Pīr Shams then paid a gracious visit and joined in the feasting; Vimras and Surbhāṇ were with him and all three sat together.	2
The devotees traced a square with coloured powders while the Guru sat in the house; They performed the rite (<i>pūjā</i>) of <i>ghaṭ</i> and made all drink the holy water (<i>nīm</i>).	3
They taught the True Path (<i>satpanth</i>) to everyone and chanted the Guru's name; In [the languages of] Keśavpūrī and Multānī were the words (<i>japa</i>) of their chant.	4
Then the Guru gave up his own seat to a man by the name of Vasto; He made him responsible for all matters to do with Bengāl.	5
The traveller [Shams] appointed [Vasto] the chief (<i>mukhī</i>) of the assembly (<i>jamā'at</i>); "Only when Vasto takes his seat may the ceremony of <i>ghaṭ pāth</i> be performed."	6
They offered a coin or two to the Pīr and held their feast there; All the pious ones gathered together and held a quiet meeting.	7
Vimras and Surbhāṇ taught them all the religious vows (<i>vrata</i>); The pious ones (<i>rikhīsar</i>) were all content and joined with conviction.	8
The Bengālīs took on the religion (<i>dharma</i>)—they were ascetics of various types; ² They embraced the religion, but kept it completely secret (<i>gupta</i>).	9
Satgur Shams uttered these words: "Listen, O brave mendicants! Entrust all to Vasto, for he is our deputy."	10

1 bangālādeśa: this could be Bengal in India or Bangladesh.
2 jogī sanyāsī aūta verāgi.



73
(Joḍilo No. 14)

- Satgur Shams uttered this speech and fulfilled the tasks of all;
His devotees (*bhakta*) Vimras and Candrabhāṇ tied the bracelets [of loyalty]. 1
- The devotees Vimras and Surbhāṇ said to Guru Shams:
“O Guru! Give us your orders (*firmān*); we are your servants (*dāsa*).” 2
- Pīr Shams said: “O Devotees! Learn about the primordial times;
That ancient worship (*pūjā*) is with you—make it your emancipation (*nirvāṇa*)!” 3
- Satgur Shams said: “O Devotees! Keep your minds steadfast!
Establish [the *ghaṭ*] and we will make you drink the holy water (*nīrmala nīr*).” 4
- Satgur Shams gave the following instruction—listen well, all of you!
“Form a gathering (*gat*) and especially on Fridays, observe this vow (*vrata*).” 5
- Pīr Shams talked and he conveyed the essence of wisdom (*ginān*);
“Whoever has faith (*imān*) and worships the Guru will attain the other shore.” 6
- Then he divulged the secret wisdom (*ginān*) and revealed the word (*śabda*);
Those who believe it as truth (*sat*), their dwelling will be in Heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*). 7
- Pīr Shams the Guru recited wisdom (*ginān*) and all in the gathering listened;
Whoever follows his wisdom will attain Immortality (*amar*) and the divine vision (*dīdār*). 8



74
(Joḍilo No. 15)

Satgur Shams then departed and came to the town of Bhoṭ;
Only Hindus were to be seen—no one there would ever offer water to a Muslim. 1

He went and sat on the west side; a throng of Hindus soon approached him.
“Get away from here! We can smell your odour inside [our homes]!” 2

Satgur Shams said: “Show us a place [to sit];
We are travellers from a foreign land and would like to rest awhile.” 3

Satgur Shams stood up and the Hindus sent two men along with him;
They led him out of the town to a terribly desolate and barren wasteland. 4

“You can rest here! Don’t come back into the town!
Else we will beat you up; only Hindus may live there.” 5

Satgur Shams replied: “Go back and stay in that town of yours!
Rest assured that we will sit right here; go back to your own homes!” 6

The two men went back into the town [thinking], “What will this achieve?
The town outskirts are extremely dry; what will they eat sitting out there?” 7

[Meanwhile] Satgur Shams had settled down and was quietly resting;
There were two children (*bālak*) beside him—Vimras and Surbhāṇ. 8

The two devotees (*bhakta*) said: “May we go to the town [gates]?”
These were their thoughts: “We will fetch some food and water.” 9

Satgur Shams said: “[Yes], go to the ascetic’s hut and call out to him;
[Tell him] to take our money and bring some water for us, for you are of Hindu birth.” 10



75
(Joḍilo No. 16)

Vimras and Surbhāṇ said: "O Hindu! You are truly merciful. We are Muslims and are very hungry but must remain outside [the town]."	1
So the ascetic came before the entrance of the town Bhoṭ and cried: "Why have you locked the gates? These poor <i>faqīrs</i> are very hungry."	2
The townsfolk replied: "After we locked up all the gates, The keys suddenly fell into pieces. The ironsmiths have all gathered."	3
The ascetic replied: "What! Why have you committed such an awful deed? Despite their garb you left them to starve?" He exclaimed, "O Rāma! O Rāma!"	4
"Lord Nārāyaṇa's fury is now upon you! The gates will never be opened. Not even if the whole world gathers. They are merely the ironsmiths of the town!"	5
He rushed to the king's palace shouting; the guard stood up and called out: "Three <i>faqīrs</i> are dying of hunger, and tonight they must stay outside [the town]."	6
"Let in the ascetic and then go and proclaim that there will be a hearing; Who threw them out of the town and with whom did they fight?"	7
The guard replied: "The <i>faqīr</i> is still in the barren outskirts [of the town]. Standing out here is an ascetic; it is he who has brought this news."	8
The king said, "Send the ascetic to go and hail [this message] to the <i>faqīr</i> . Tell him King Rāmaṅgaji has invited him. Why do you pick this fight for nothing!"	9
He went to the ascetic and said: "The king orders that you go to the <i>faqīr</i> . Fetch him and bring him here. [Say to him:] Come and stay in the town."	10
So the ascetic Śivbhaṭ returned to his own hut; He went and sat where Vimras and Surbhāṇ were standing.	11
Satgur Shams said: "This happened in that town of Bhoṭ; Vimras and Surbhāṇ are my devotees (<i>bhakta</i>); they are my servants (<i>dāsa</i>)."	12



76
(Joḍilo No. 17)

"The king has summoned you; the town is in utter chaos— Its gates cannot be opened. [The king] calls for you."	1
The devotees (<i>bhakta</i>) replied: "We will not enter the king's town; We will meet him in the wilderness. I am Surbhāṇ, a Hindu."	2
Then Śivbhaṭ asked: "Who showed you to that place?" "Two men came with us and ordered us to stay there!"	3
"We had stopped outside the town in front of that gate over there; The Hindus came rushing up to us saying: 'Get up from here at once!'"	4
"Our Pīr stood up, left the town limits and went into the wasteland." Śivbhaṭ promptly stood up and went to the king.	5
"Listen, O King Rāmsaṅgadev! That <i>faqīr</i> is none other than a Pīr! He was sent off to the wasteland; his body will remain starved and thirsty!"	6
The king asked: "Who has inflicted this suffering upon him?" He sent a man at once to bring [the Pīr] to his home.	7
Well until after noon, the gates of the fort remained locked; "Go fetch the people who have caused all this trouble!"	8
The people were summoned and brought before the king; "We know nothing except that the dwellers on the west side troubled him."	9
Folks of the west end were summoned and brought before the king; "What kind of odour did you smell that you banished the <i>faqīr</i> ?"	10
"Now you have sealed the city's gates of which five are on the west side; Go and have them opened or else I will decide your fate this evening!"	11
The dwellers of the west end came and sat in the king's court; "We have failed to undo the locks; you must fetch the Pīr at once."	12
Outside sat the ascetic whose name was Śivbhaṭ; The king called out to him and said: "O sage, do this job for us!"	13
"Go fall at the Pīr's feet and convey to him our respects (<i>praṇām</i>); [Tell him:] The king prostrates himself at your feet and entreats you to unfasten the town gates."	14
Śivbhaṭ left from there and went over to the Pīr; He stood saying: "You are Nārāyaṇa! O Swāmī, I am your servant (<i>dāsa</i>)."	15
Satgur Shams looked at him: "Dear old man! What brings you to this place?" "King Rāmsaṅgadev says our town-gates are sealed—[please set them free]."	16



77
(Joḍilo No. 18)

“We will not come to the town but will remain right here; Repeat our name in front of one gate and it will open.”	1
The ascetic rushed back quickly and conveyed his reply to the king: “Repeat our name in front of one gate and it will open.”	2
The king immediately stood up and went before the gate; Humbly, ¹ he pleaded and invoked the name of the <i>faqīr</i> who was indeed a Pīr.	3
The king walked ahead and with him were a hundred-thousand strong; All came to the parched wilderness and stood before the Pīr.	4
The king prostrated himself at his feet and then standing up, pleaded: “O Swāmi! Please come to our town and make your dwelling there.”	5
Pīr Shams replied: “We will sit right here in this barren place. It is your own people who made us sit here in the wilderness.”	6
The king fell prostrate again at the feet of Satgur Shams and entreated him: “O Pīr! Please come.” Just then, a cow descended from heaven (<i>svarga</i>).	7
Satgur Shams said: “Listen, O my brave Devotees (<i>bhakta</i>)! Go fetch a bowl of water and wash the cow's feet!”	8
Obeying his order (<i>firmān</i>), the devotees of Satgur Shams fetched water; With [this] water from the Ganges they sprinkled [the cow], the body of all creation.	9
Vimras brought out a cup and went near the cow; He milked her and placed the cup [of milk] in the hands of Pīr Shams.	10
Satgur Shams said: “King, take this cup in your hand. Give some milk to all those who came along with you!”	11
The king said: “No one must go back to Bhoṭnagar! First drink this milk from the Pīr; only then may you all return.”	12
The king gave a portion of milk to everyone and he marveled at the cup; Though all drank to their satisfaction, the cup was not drained.	13
King Devsaṅga ² called for his Queen and she came to the town outskirts; Releasing her <i>cheḍo</i> , ³ she prostrated herself and touched the Pīr's feet.	14

¹ lit. standing, as a sign of respect.

² Note the king's name changes from Rāmsaṅga to Devsaṅga.

³ Portion of the *sāri* which is used to cover the head like a scarf.



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Blessing her (*āṣiṣa*), Satgur Shams said: “O Lady, may you go to Heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*)!”
 The Queen’s name was Śilvantī Sadā,¹ and she went and stood by the king. 15

King Rāmsaṅgadev and Queen Śilvantī Sadā,
 The two of them remained standing and made plea after plea (*vinantī*). 16

“Now go back to your own place; our dwelling is right here!”
 Standing next to the Pīr were his servants Vimras and Surbhāṇ. 17

The king wept and wept and the queen begged the Pīr:
 “O Satgur! Indeed, you are so great. O Swāmī, will you not save us?” 18

The queen counselled the king: “Let us fall prostrate at the Pīr’s feet;
 Once we submit to him,² we can return to our homes.” 19

The king said again and again: “O Swāmī, purify us!
 Accept us as your own; only then shall we partake of food.” 20

Satgur Shams said: “We had stopped [to rest] on that side;
 Then some of your people shouted, ‘How dare a Muslim sit up here!’” 21

A *Banyo* from the west side whose name was Rugjī Raṇachoḍ,
 And another called Trikam came forward—the whole town had gathered. 22

“O Master (*prabhu*)! [Forgive us!] We did not know that you were a great sage;
 Now we will ever remain your servants (*sevak*)—indeed, you are kind and merciful.” 23

“O King! Take charge of your kingdom and insure our protection!
 The day has come to an end and dusk set in.” 24

In the year *Samvaṭ* 1178 on the last day of the month of *Kartik* ,
 The Guru established a place [for himself] and the day was a Tuesday. 25

He taught the religious vows (*vrata*) and he installed the *ghaṭ-pāṭh* ceremony;
 The whole town drank the holy water (*niyam*)—what a huge crowd had formed. 26

Seventy rounds of food were cooked and 360 ascetics were fed;
 The gathering (*gat*) assembled together and came to the king’s palace. 27

Satgur Shams taught them religion (*dharma*)—Vimras and Surbhāṇ were his devotees;
 The Guru spoke wisdom (*ginān*) and the king listened to his teachings. 28

“Submit in the hands of the collector³ the Pīr’s portion of tithe (*dasonḍ*)!
 Whatever it is, be it one coin or two, O King, keep that aside!” 29

“Keep aside in your palace that portion of income which belongs to the Pīr;
 Put it together in a bundle and make sure it reaches us at our place.” 30

The assembly (*gat*) gathered at the west gate, Rugjī Raṇachoḍ and Trikam too;
 They all came to visit the Guru at his own place. 31

¹ lit. the eternally-pure, pious, patient.

² lit. become his, belong to him.

³ muṣṭafar, lit. traveller, courier: traditionally, the tithe was collected by someone appointed by the Imām or Pīr who travelled from place to place.



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- The three hundred and sixty ascetics also came there in a group;
Having performed his religious vows, Śivbhaṭ went to the treasury. 32
- Śivbhaṭ came to king Devsaṅga who was from the Gaekvād caste;
He would explain to all of them the meaning of the Guru's wisdom (*ginān*). 33
- He imparted the principles of religion and the Guru revealed the word (*japa*);
Then the Satgur assured them all: "We are always with you." 34
- Seating his disciples (*bhakta*) at the table, he made them repeat the Guru's name;
The hearts of all were delighted and they all came near the Guru. 35
- The king and queen said: "O Guru! Please visit our house.
Once you depart, O Guru, what will be our condition?!" 36
- Satgur Shams replied: "We will come back to see you again.
Pray with a single mind and you will surely attain Heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*)."
- Satgur Shams then said: "We will now proceed to Jambudvīpa;
We have established our centre there—make a note of this." 38
- Satgur Shams rose to leave and told the king one more thing:
"Recommend all to repeat the voiceless word (*ajampiyājapa*)."
- Satgur Shams said: "O King, have faith (*viśvās*)!
We have two devotees (*bhakta*); they are our servants (*dāsa*). 40



78

(The Ascetic's Wisdom)¹

O Ascetic!² Make the world your sack, satisfaction your bowl!
Let discernment be your rod!
Don the earrings of humility and kindness!
Let wisdom (*ginān*) be your sustenance.

Refrain

O Ascetic! He in this world is a *jogī* in whose mind is no other [save God]. 1

O Ascetic! Knowledge (*ginān*) is my Guru,
Renounce the senses and apply ash!³
Believing in its truth (*sat*), meditate on the True Religion (*satdharma*)!
Then ascetic you are a real *jogī*. 2

O Ascetic! With concentration as your rod,
Still the mind and arrest the moon and sun!⁴
Then will the *suṣumaṇā* string begin to play,
Such a mystery is the portion of but a few. 3

O Ascetic! Abandon all your sins—
Bathe in the crossing of the three rivers (*trivenī*)
And strike up the the unstruck sound (*anāhata nāda*);
Pīr Shams says: Die when still alive and you will not be reborn. 4

1 *ginān* *abadhu*: Guj. *avadhūta* – ascetic, renunciate; cf. *Ginān* # 58 is identical but does not have this title.

2 *abadhu*: Guj. *avadhūta* – ascetic, renunciate

3 *bhabhūta*: Guj. *bhabhūti* – sacred ash, ash from sacrificial fire; cf. Hin. *vibhūti*.

4 Symbols in Tantric meditation and Kuṇḍalinī yoga.



79
(Garbī No. 1)

O Austere Ones (<i>munivar</i>)! Know that Shams is the primordial Guru; Indeed, he has roamed through many an age (<i>yuga</i>).	1
[One day] he went to a village called Analvād Where countless numbers of Hindus lived.	2
The village was full of shrines and temples Dedicated to their dear [goddess] <i>Mātā Bhavānī</i> .	3
It was <i>Navrātrī</i> ¹ and everyone was dancing the <i>garbī</i> ; ² To such a place Guru Shams went.	4
It was the first night of the month <i>āso śuddha</i> ; ³ Everyone had come together to dance the first <i>garbī</i> .	5
Thirty-six paṇḍits were telling tales of lore (<i>kathā</i>), With five-hundred actors enacting them as drama.	6
The Guru went and stood beside them; He listened to the entire recital of the Hindus.	7
They danced fervently and sang with intensity; They dearly worshipped their stone idols.	8
All this aroused anger in Pir Shams; He went and joined the dancers in their dance.	9
Then the Guru began to sing his songs of wisdom (<i>ginān</i>); The ignorant Hindus [were startled] and listened to them.	10

¹ navrātrī: ie *navrātrī* – festival held during the first nine days of *aṣvin* in honour of the goddess Durgā.

² A circular pot-dance in which the rhythm is kept by clapping the hands and feet. *Garbī* also refers to the songs sung during the dance. Derived from *garbha* - a holed pot used as the deity's receptacle. The women generally carry earthen pots with lamps on their heads as they dance.

³ *Āso* or *aṣvin* is the twelfth or last month of the Hindu calendar; *śuddha* refers to the bright half of the lunar month held sacred to Durgā.



80
(Garbī No. 2)

Today this mind has attained bliss (<i>ānanda</i>) by serving (<i>sevā</i>) the Satgur.	1
Do not be deceived, O you foolish people! Hold the essence in your hearts.	2
Those idols in the temple are but stones! Why dance around them in circles?	3
Serve the Light (<i>nūr</i>) of Satgur! The Guru who is the master of Divine Light.	4
Be loyal in giving the offering (<i>dāna</i>) of tithe(<i>dasond</i>)! Then you will reap success.	5
Those who walk on the True Path (<i>satpanth</i>)—these pious ones (<i>nīkhīsar</i>) will reign.	6
Keep on dancing all of you night and day! But alas, you will attain nothing.	7
All those idols are mere stones! They cannot even utter a single word.	8
Why are you deceived by such fake idols? They are just man-made toys.	9
It is a lie that a god (<i>deva</i>) is in this <i>garbī</i> ! Where is [this Goddess] Bhavānī?	10
The creative powers of Guru Brahmā are abundant. All existence is within it.	11
Regard the whole world (<i>saṁsār</i>) as false! Know this from Yama. ¹	12
Believe in the manifestation (<i>avatār</i>) of ‘Alī! Then you will reap fruit.	13
You will thus be absolved of sin and regret and attain an elevated rank.	14
In this manner, the Satgur explained the truth (<i>sāc</i>); but they did not understand.	15
All the people listened to him and then said:	16
“Come back on the second night and we will dance together.”	17
Pīr Shams the Guru said: Be heedful of your conduct!	18

¹ The god of death.



81
(Garbī No. 3)

The Guru came the second night; he came and he danced.	1
He uttered sweet words (<i>bol</i>); his words were like nectar (<i>amṛta</i>).	2
Listen together ali of you: be mindful of your conduct!	3
All this is nothing but a sham; know this for sure!	4
Think about it yourselves: what is a stone [after all, but a stone]?	5
Rather serve Sāheb, the Creator (<i>sirjaṇhār</i>), with firm faith (<i>viśvās</i>).	6
He who created four types of creatures ¹ and infused them with life.	7
He who came age after age to fulfill the tasks of his devotees (<i>bhakta</i>).	8
He who rescued the sage Ṛṣi Mugat by relieving him of his vows.	9
He who protected Gautam's honor by reviving his sunken wife.	10
He who secured an invincible rule for Dhruva who thus attained the zenith.	11
He who came bursting through the pillar and saved the life of Prahlaḍ.	12
He who mercilessly slew Hiraṇyakaśipu and tore him to pieces with his nails.	13
He who held the hand of [King] Hariścandra and rescued him [from death].	14
He who was supreme in the second age (<i>dvāpur</i>) and saved the Pāṇḍavas.	15
He who in this age of <i>Kalyug</i> saved twelve crore devout followers (<i>satī</i>) with truth.	16
He who in this last phase [of <i>Kalyug</i>] will save countless austere ones (<i>murivar</i>).	17
Guru Shams the Pīr said: Attain purity (<i>śuddha</i>) through truth (<i>sat</i>).	18

¹ cāra khāna: perhaps a reference to the four modes of genesis of all creatures, viz., through 1) egg 2) sprout 3) perspiration and 4) womb.



82
(Garbi No. 4)

The Guru came every night and made them listen to wisdom (<i>ginān</i>).	1
But the ignorant fools did not hear, for their ears were deaf.	2
The Guru uttered sweet words (<i>bol</i>); listen to them attentively!	3
Why do you perform such false drama? Why not realise their deceit?	4
You should worship the true name, that of the Lord Naklañkī.	5
He who established the heavenly throne ¹ and who gave rise to all things.	6
He who created the moon and the sun, the wind and the water.	7
Perform good deeds to secure the purity of your self.	8
None of you knows the True Path(<i>satpanth</i>); your hearts are full of falsehood.	9
Purge yourselves of evil and deceit, and preserve your self-worth!	10
Meditate upon the precepts (<i>ācār</i>) of religion (<i>dharma</i>) revealed by Guru Brahmā.	11
The name of the final prophet was Muḥammad—[bearer of] Divine Light (<i>nūr</i>).	12
Recall and meditate upon his essence and believe in Mawlānā ‘Alī.	13
Who holds mantle [of authority] at present? We disclose his name—it is Shāh Nizār.	14
The Imāms are from Light; they are ever-present (<i>qā’im</i>) in the world.	15
Listen to this true wisdom (<i>jñāna</i>) and serve [them].	16
Then you will reach the other shore (<i>pahele pār</i>) and attain Heaven (<i>svarga</i>).	17
Guru Shams the Pīr spoke thus: Be honest in giving your tithe (<i>dasand</i>).	18

¹ arasa kursa: Ar. al-Arsh wa al-Kursī; Qur’anic reference to Allah’s divine platform or throne.



83
(Garbī No. 5)

Drink nectar (<i>amīras</i>) day and night and thus be filled with Light upon Light (<i>nūr</i>)!	1
Your sins and regrets will vanish and your mind will be cleansed.	2
Listen carefully to this sacred speech (<i>āgama</i>) and believe it in your hearts.	3
Reflect upon this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) and then act, else you will go astray.	4
Those who did not listen carefully to this wisdom have gone astray.	5
Do not let this human life slip away from your hands; you will not have it again.	6
Meditate on the precepts (<i>ācār</i>) of religion (<i>dharma</i>); the faithless have gone astray.	7
Perform righteous deeds and you will attain Heaven (<i>vaikuṇṭha</i>).	8
Know the straight path of truth (<i>sat</i>)! The dishonest have departed from it.	9
Those who realise the whole essence, they attain the fruits.	10
Listen carefully to such wisdom (<i>ginān</i>), for it is a priceless gem.	11
Lest you go astray again and again, be mindful of your conduct!	12
Keep the company of truth and purify your minds.	13
Expel evil and deceit and you will reap the fruits.	14
Perform good and excellent deeds and harbour affection in the heart.	15
Hold pious gatherings (<i>satsaṅga</i>) properly and keep true to your religion (<i>dharma</i>).	16
Serve (<i>sevā</i>) sincerely the Light of the Satgur; know he is Lord (<i>nara</i>) Qāsim Shāh.	17
Thus spoke Guru Shams the Pīr: [Do this and] you will reap the fruit.	18



84
(Garbi No. 6)

Lo! The nectar (<i>amṛta</i>) of Divine Light (<i>nūr</i>) rains on us and we take delight in Nature!	1
Keep on each side four lively oxen and hold their reins firmly.	2
All is in the hands of the Guru; into yours take the remembrance (<i>smaraṇa</i>) [of God].	3
Plough your field with good deeds and plant in it the seeds of vows (<i>vrata</i>).	4
Cast away your shroud of sins and let your mind beware.	5
Tear away at the roots of evil deeds and make your minds pure.	6
Daily uproot the weeds [of evil] and furrow the sad path of separation.	7
If the lion of truth (<i>sat</i>) is left outside [to guard the crop], what can the crows do?	8
Love the company of, virtue and in your hearts cultivate devotion for God (<i>hari</i>).	9
You will see your land yield abundant crops and heap upon heap [of harvest].	10
Reap it [while you can] and be fruitful in your farming! Keep vigil day and night!	11
Take care when you remove the husk! Thrash both sides [of the grain].	12
Work as if you were the oxen of religion (<i>dharma</i>); thus attain the eternal [reward].	13
Fill your carts with the Guru's wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) and carry it within yourself.	14
Do not willfully cheat in your minds: give the tithe (<i>dasand</i>) [faithfully].	15
In this manner, if you dance day and night, you will abide in bliss.	16
Perform your works with devotion (<i>bhakti</i>) and ardour and you will attain the fruit.	17
Thus spoke Guru Shams, the Pīr: Believe in this with all your heart!	18



85
(Garbī No. 7)

Dance in this manner night and day and enjoy the reign of bliss.	1
The Creator (<i>kirtār</i>) stamps his peacock seal ¹ age after age.	2
Reap your harvest in this world itself and enjoy the reign of bliss.	3
Heaven-bound, Divine Light (<i>nūr</i>) will shower upon you at the fixed entrance.	4
Hold the Guru's wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) with the right hand and follow the book (<i>pustak</i>).	5
Grasp the reins of intellect and use them to control your mind.	6
If you are well-trained in self-sacrifice, what [fear] can the sword inspire?	7
Why return to be born in this world again, why take the rounds of rebirth (<i>ferā</i>)?	8
Ultimately what aid will the world give you that [you covet it like an] ardent prince?	9
Without a Master (<i>prabhu</i>), you read scripture (<i>purāṇ</i>)—without a seed, you try to sow!	10
In [such a land], only embers of fire come forth, only poisoned grass and weeds.	11
Without the Guru, these people are frauds, deceivers! Why remain with them?	12
The scriptures (<i>veda purāṇ</i>) are the Guru's throne! Why be foolish, misguided?	13
The Swāmī will come to Jambudvīpa, for it is virgin land.	14
Over and over you slander and gossip! Hence you go astray in the journey.	15
All are ravaged who go astray; their business and livelihood crumble to dust.	16
The True Path (<i>satpanth</i>) is like a sword's edge—so be engrossed in wisdom (<i>ginān</i>).	17
Keep pondering over the Guru's teachings and have supreme faith (<i>viśvās</i>).	18
Thus spoke Guru Shams the Pīr: Believe this in your hearts.	19

¹ mora chāpa: allusion not known.



86
(Garbī No. 8)

Repeat the word (<i>japa</i>) day and night and rejoice in the [inner] temple (<i>mandir</i>).	1
When concentration (<i>surti</i>) is fixed between the brows, rejoice in immortality (<i>amar</i>).	2
The concentration should be like the string which remains intact when stretched.	3
Then the unstruck sound will play and the even breathing of “I am He” sets in.	4
When you thus sit absorbed in concentration, how can the wicked distract you?	5
When concentration is fixed between the brows, you will bathe in the Light (<i>nūr</i>).	6
They read the scripture (<i>purāṇ</i>) but realise not its secret (<i>bhed</i>)—what to expect of fools?	7
Come and recognise that All-Knowing! Be mindful and vigilant.	8
Focus between the brows where the sun is ablaze and take the universe in hand.	9
If you must give up your head to acquire it, know this is still a good bargain.	10
Indeed, only with the refinement of previous births will you attain success.	11
Be brave and fight face-to-face! Be willing to sacrifice your head and return.	12
In your hearts you must harbour affection for the Guru.	13
Then the [soul's] immortal field will yield ripe fruit, and happily you will pick it.	14
Acquire the gem in your hand, O Believer (<i>muʾmin</i>)! Why go on the rounds of rebirths?	15
Watch [yourselves] carefully and be fully devoted; then you will reap success.	16
O Brother, do not steal in secret! Give your tithe(<i>dasond</i>) [faithfully].	17
Know how to act in the world—abide by the book (<i>pustak</i>).	18
O Pious! Be careful in your minds and you will rejoice in freedom (<i>mukti</i>).	19
Pay attention to the Guru's wisdom (<i>ginān</i>)! Why wander in aimless circles?	20
Those who have followed the Guru's wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) have become immortal (<i>amar</i>).	21
Thus spoke Guru Shams the Pir: Believe this in your heart and thoughts.	22



87
(Garbi No. 9)

Dazed! Dazed like that stunned wasp!	1
O my Soul! ¹ Why are you lost too?	2
In the fires of sacrifice, awaken the body.	3
That soul that errs now, surely it will lose out.	4
Once before, others went safely across [the ocean of] life.	5
How will you go across to the other shore? ²	6
Ahead of you there will be no raft nor boat.	7
There will be no weights nor scales.	8
With truth (<i>sat</i>) [alone] you must go across to the other shore.	9
Religion (<i>dharmā</i>) will take you across to the other shore.	10
Brother, the Guru will accompany you as your guarantor.	11
In this way will you go across to the other shore.	12
Whoever stepped lightly, O Brother, was saved.	13
Those who carried baggage on their heads drowned.	14
There will be no shops, no traders before you.	15
There will be no business, no merchants.	16
Ahead of you will be no brother, no sister.	17
There will be no father, no mother.	18
Brother, alone you will get up and go.	19
So take religion(<i>dharmā</i>) along with you.	20
Guru Shams has spoken this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>).	21
Friends! Perform some good deeds for religion (<i>dharmā</i>).	22

1 prāṇa: lit. breath.

2 pāṇiyā: Guj. *pāṇa* – barricade, barrier, wall; but also *pāra* – bank, shore.



88
(Garbī No. 10)

Pīr Shams has shown the True Path (<i>satmārga</i>) through the <i>garbī</i> .	1
Those who contemplated the eternal name (<i>nām</i>) themselves became immortal (<i>amar</i>).	2
Word by word, the Guru has imparted knowledge and disclosed it to all.	3
He explained the scriptures(<i>veda purāṇ</i>) and told the stories from memory.	4
The Guru danced in the <i>garbī</i> and he recited the <i>Qurʿān</i> .	5
Speaking priceless words, he himself acted out a drama.	6
First he described the four cycles (<i>kalpa</i>) and the creation of the universe.	7
Guru Brahmā played the role of creating the ages of time (<i>yuga</i>).	8
From Viṣṇu's yawn came forth [creation] due to his Light (<i>teja</i>).	9
Brahmā's creations were innumerable, some eight hundred-thousand.	10
Then Māyā wove her web of worldly delusion by which all were bewitched.	11
Into delusion she threw [the world] and troubled the saints (<i>ṛṣi</i>) [with temptation].	12
Also in this age of <i>Kalyug</i> , she entices the world (<i>saṃsār</i>) and the ignorant go astray.	13
Once the first cycle was spread far and wide, the Yakṣas were created.	14
Since then has He, the Lord (<i>nara</i>) himself, established the religion of <i>Satpanth</i> .	15
Guru Shams was present on that occasion; in truth, he was Brahmā.	16
He took the holy water (<i>pāval</i>) and made the saints drink—thus did he purify them.	17
Guru Shams the Pīr said: Drink the holy water (<i>pāval</i>) with sincerity.	18



89
(Garbī No. 11)

Drink the holy water(<i>pāval</i>) sincerely day and night and you will reap fruit.	1
Just as ninety crore Yakṣas ¹ were successful and became immortal (<i>amara</i>).	2
Similarly the Meghas, fifty-six crores of them, were successful.	3
Likewise the Kinnar deities, thirty-two crores of them, were successful.	4
And among the Devas, thirty-three crore were successful and attained fruit.	5
Then in four moments of the last cycle (<i>kalpa</i>), numerous souls (<i>jīva</i>) were saved.	6
Five crore [were saved] by King Prahlād who recited the name of Narsimha.	7
Seven crore [were saved] by King Hariścandra who was saved by Śrī Rāma.	8
Nine crore [were saved] by the Pāṇḍava princes who were saved by Śrī Buddha.	9
Under Prince Yudhiṣṭhira, the heir to the throne, every one of them was saved.	10
Twelve crore pious (<i>satī</i>) [were saved] by truth (<i>sat</i>) in this age of <i>Kalyug</i> .	11
Their rescuer was Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn; he saved them all by himself.	12
They meditated on the name of Muḥammad and the manifestation (<i>avatār</i>) of ‘Alī.	13
In this last phase, all will be saved who follow the True Path (<i>satpanth</i>).	14
That austere one (<i>munivar</i>) who drinks the holy water and submits the tithe (<i>dasonḍ</i>);	15
That person who performs his forty rites, he will enter the Infinite (<i>ananta</i>).	16
He will be welcomed into Heaven (<i>svarga</i>), and he will reap the fruit of Immortality.	17
His mother and father and their ancestors, seventy-one of them—	18
They will all accompany him, they too will attain Heaven (<i>vaikuṇṭha</i>).	19
[But] those who worship (<i>pūjā</i>) false deities of stone, they will go to hell (<i>dozakḥ</i>).	20
Thus spoke Guru Shams the Pīr: Dance in the company of truth (<i>satsaṅga</i>)!	21

¹ A species of semi-divine beings.



90
(Garbī No. 12)

Beware! Beware that wavering mind, O wary ones!	1
Dance! Play with colourful delight, O pious ones!	2
Give up foolishness, greed and falsehood!	3
Remember that Wielder of the bow, [Viṣṇu]!	4
You believe lovingly in stones;	5
[But] you will not thereby attain Brahmā.	6
These <i>garbīs</i> for [the goddess] Bhavānī are all a sham.	7
These lamps (<i>jyoti</i>) are but a fistful of deceptions.	8
What will dancing achieve? Lack of breath and tiredness!	9
Do not colour your hearts with such false merriment!	10
You have united together merely to enjoy the food!	11
Earnings from such deception and fraud are counterfeit.	12
Serve the Lord (<i>nara</i>) whose name is Qāsim Shāh.	13
Then you will attain the place of Heaven (<i>vaikuṇṭha</i>).	14
Concentrate upon religion (<i>dharma</i>), on the path (<i>mārga</i>) of <i>Satpanth</i> ..	15
Powerful is the true Sāheb—[serve him]!	16
Thus spoke Guru Shams the Pīr.	17
He unlocked [the hearts] of all the dancers.	18



91
(Garbī No. 13)

The Guru came on the seventh night and danced with great delight.	1
All the people of the city were gathered there and they danced with the Guru.	2
Guru Shams recited wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) with intense fervour and feeling.	3
He described the spread of <i>Ratnayug</i> ¹ ; listen carefully, all of you!	4
Ninety-nine [crore] Yakṣas will come together there with as many Medhas.	5
Thirty-two crore Kinnars will come together there and rejoice.	6
Thirty-three crore Devas will worshipfully welcome the Gurunara.	7
Five crore will come with King Prahlād and meet all the gods.	8
Then King Hariścandra will make a plea on behalf of his gathering (<i>jamā'at</i>).	9
Nine crore will come with the Pāṇḍava princes and enjoy supreme happiness.	10
Numerous will come together with Pīr Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, some twelve crore.	11
Countless crore will come with Guru Ḥasan Shāh ² who upheld the <i>Vedas</i> .	12
All the divine prophets (<i>pegambar</i>) will meet there, 125,000 of them.	13
Ḥusayn's followers will be present and Light (<i>nūr</i>) will shower upon them.	14
When the dancers heard about the glorious <i>Ratnayug</i> , they were awe-struck.	15
But they could not grasp the Guru's art and remained selfish and ignorant.	16
From amidst the <i>garbī</i> crowd rose hails and cries of rejoicing: <i>jai jai! jai jai!</i>	17
The whole night passed thus in bliss (<i>ānanda</i>) and no one withdrew till dawn.	18
This became the talk of the town and everybody wanted to see for themselves.	19
Thus spoke Guru Shams the Pīr; he had delivered a [great] performance.	20

1 *ratnayuga*: lit. the age of *ratna*, the jewel; reference unknown.

2 Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn.



٥٠
(Garbī No. 14)

Satgur Shams says: O Careless Ones! (<i>gāfal</i>)! How will you go across to the other shore (<i>pār</i>)?	1
O Careless Ones! You adorn these stone-idols with colours! But this will not earn you the Creator (<i>ṣirjaṇhār</i>).	2
O Careless Ones! Why go round and round in circles? Concentrate on the religion (<i>dharma</i>) of <i>Satpanth</i> !	3
O Careless Ones! Discard your idols of stones! Free yourselves from past deeds (<i>karma</i>) with the truth (<i>sat</i>).	4
O Careless Ones! Cast off [the goddess] <i>Mātā Bhavānī</i> ! Serve (<i>sevā</i>) instead the manifestation of (<i>avatār</i>) ʿAlī.	5
O Careless Ones! Drink the holy water (<i>pāval</i>)! Dwell on the precepts (<i>ācār</i>) of religion (<i>dharma</i>).	6
O Careless Ones! Believe in the Light (<i>nūr</i>) of Qāsim Shāh! He is the legitimate heir, the true Imām ¹ in this age of <i>Kalyug</i> .	7
O Careless Ones! Release the padlocks on your hearts! Witness that place of liberation (<i>mukti</i>)!	8
O Careless Ones! The Divine Light shines in Śrī Islām Shāh! Recognise the Lord (<i>nara</i>) when you see him!	9
O Careless Ones! By his magic I have come here; Indeed, I am Pīr Shams.	10
O Careless Ones! I have come to take a pledge (<i>kol</i>); Today, give me your word (<i>vāc</i>)!	11
O Careless Ones! Those who act paying heed to our teachings, They will enjoy that immovable reign [of bliss].	12
O Careless Ones! This is the age (<i>yuga</i>) of the last battlefield; O my Brothers, be vigilant!	13
O Careless Ones! Believe in the religion (<i>dharma</i>) of <i>Satpanth</i> ! Hold fast to the resolve in your hearts.	14
O Careless Ones! You will not be saved by false practices! I am revealing to you words of truth (<i>sat</i>).	15
O Careless Ones! This is the final stage of <i>Kalyug</i> , so beware! Remember the Wielder of the bow [Viṣṇu].	16

¹ āla imām: Per. *ahl-e-imām*: family of the *imām*, descendants in the line of imāmate.



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O Careless Ones! Take care, thoughtful ones, take care!
Drink the pure water (*nirmala nīr*).

17

O Careless Ones! Composing this [*garbī*], the Guru declared it;
Thus spoke Shams, the Pir.

18



93
(Garbi No. 15)

The Guru says: Listen, O Careless Ones <i>gāfal</i> !	1
Why go round and round in the vain circles [of rebirth]?	2
There will not be an eleventh form (<i>rūpa</i>).	3
There will be no fifth age after this [last age] of <i>Kalyug</i> .	4
Today the Gurunara has arrived and become manifest.	5
He has revealed himself in human form.	6
Recognise the essence (<i>sār</i>) of that true receptacle.	7
Else you will fall apart from him, the Creator (<i>śirjaṇhār</i>).	8
Then truly will you regret your foolishness,	9
When every one of you faces the [final] trial.	10
The Guru said repeatedly to the dancers:	11
Why dance this way in vain? You are foolish!	12
If you apprehend the Guru, you will attain [salvation].	13
You will gain immortality in the Immortal City (<i>amarāpurī</i>) .	14
Now we have fulfilled our promise (<i>kol</i>) .	15
The final message has been made plain and evident.	16
Guru Shams has kept the promise that he gave.	17
He appeared in this age of <i>Kalyug</i> and roamed.	18



94
(Garbī No. 16)

On the eighth night the townsfolk came; they watched everything attentively.	1
Guru Shams sang sweet words (<i>bol</i>) and all of them listened together.	2
The Guru recited nectar-like wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) about primordial beginnings.	3
[About the times] when earth and sky, wind and water were created.	4
Then four kinds of beings were brought forth and eighteen types of vegetation.	5
His ancestor was the Master (<i>īśvar</i>) Adam who was created from Light (<i>nūr</i>).	6
First the Holy Five ¹ were created; they [too] were created from Light.	7
Those who know the secret know that the religion (<i>dīn</i>) Satpanth was created that day.	8
Those who obey the chief (<i>mukhī</i>) of the assembly (<i>jamā'at</i>) will be freed of past deeds.	9
The gathering (<i>gat</i>) is filled with infinite magic: all [who join] are filled by it.	10
The gathering is filled with Yakṣas, Mēdhas, Kinnars and thirty-three crore [deities].	11
The gathering is filled with the saints (<i>awliyā</i>) who all bear Divine Light (<i>teja</i>).	12
The gathering radiates with the Gurunara who is also full of Divine Light.	13
In the gathering is the Creator himself who is forever [resplendent].	14
In the gathering is the path to freedom (<i>mukti</i>)—those who understand will have it.	15
Alas, those in this foolish world who remain in error—they will not understand!	16
Such a secret (<i>bhed</i>) the Guru has disclosed himself: Do not be foolish and go astray!	17
Thus spoke Guru Shams the Pī; the Guru has narrated this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>).	18

¹ panjatan pāka lit the five pure ones. A reference to Muḥammed, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan and Husayn.



95
(Garbī No. 17)

Upon the order (<i>firmān</i>) of Lord Qāsim Shāh Guru Shams, the Pīr, went to roam.	
Refrain: O Mother, he left to roam!	1
He travelled through twenty-four kingdoms. ¹	2
First he went to the city of Cīnab where he enlightened the lady Surjādevī.	3
Then at Meru, he witnessed many wonders that were endless in number.	4
Then, he who belonged to the family of the prophet, came to the city of Ucch.	5
Here he exposed Bahā ³ al-Dīn's wickedness, cursing him with a pair of horns.	6
Then the Guru revived a corpse and performed countless [other] feats.	7
The whole world watched as the Satgur bade the sun [to descend].	8
The Guru performed such miracles for, verily, he was as Kṛṣṇa ² himself.	9
From there he came to Analvād where he danced in the <i>garbī</i> dance.	10
Fools did not grasp the essence and circling round and round, went astray.	11
Reciting wisdom (<i>ginān</i>), the Guru said this to the endless in number.	12
While narrating the four scriptures(<i>veda</i>), he revealed the four books (<i>kitāb</i>).	13
To all he imparted the true teaching—the path of the religion (<i>dharma</i>) of <i>Satpanth</i> .	14
In many talks the Guru explained that the last scripture (<i>veda</i>) was the <i>Qurʾān</i> .	15
Whoever understood must surely have been meritorious in their past deeds.	16
For, the Guru said they became immortal. Beware, this age of <i>Kalyug</i> is the last.	17
This is what Guru Shams said; indeed, this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) reveals the truth (<i>sāc</i>)!	18

¹ sri vara mīr: this phrase which forms the rest of the sentence is obscure.

² murāri: lit. slayer of demons; epithet of Kṛṣṇa.



96
(Garbī No. 18)

O Hindus! Stop going aimlessly in circles! What meaning do you see in this?	1
O Hindus! What will you gain by stone-worship except to accumulate <i>karma</i> .	2
O Hindus! You adorn stones with garlands: do not be foolish, do not go astray!	3
O Hindus! He who errs loses the essence (<i>sār</i>); he will find a place nowhere.	4
O Hindus! Those who dwell on the three <i>Vedas</i> ! Know their time is over.	5
O Hindus! Gone are the nine saviours (<i>avatār</i>) upon whom you meditate!	6
O Hindus! Gone is Brahmā of the brahmins! He has become the Husaynī <i>īmām</i> .	7
O Hindus! Gone are the [times of] cow-worship! Now worship ‘Alī’s name (<i>nām</i>).	8
O Hindus! Gone are the 68 pilgrimages (<i>tīrtha</i>) [once] so full of Brahmā’s feats.	9
O Hindus! On and on why wander in circles? Drink in the pure Light (<i>nūr</i>)! ¹	10
O Hindus! Why bow your heads before stone? Know that the <i>avatār</i> is Qāsim Shāh.	11
O Hindus! He who lives in Kahak city is the Sāheb—he is the giver of boons!	12
O Hindus! Worshipping him, you will be freed—today I have revealed the truth (<i>sāc</i>).	13
O Hindus! Attaining Heaven (<i>vaikuṇṭha</i>), you will reign in ceaseless bliss.	14
O Hindus! You will gain fifty damsels if you accept the religion (<i>dharma</i>) of <i>Satpanth</i> .	15
O Hindus! Give up your sins in the gathering and all your deeds (<i>karma</i>) will dissolve.	16
O Hindus! Pīr Shams said this: I am revealing to you the final message.	17
O Hindus! Do not be fools and go astray; serve the Bow-Wielder [Viṣṇu]!	18

¹ nīramala nūra: in other cases, nīramala nīra, that is, holy or pure water.



97
(Garbī No. 19)

On the ninth night the Guru himself came and everyone danced with joy.	1
He danced with a purpose and imparted many teachings.	2
He praised the <i>Panĵtan Pāk</i> who were born of Divine Light (<i>nūr</i>).	3
From the Light (<i>nūr</i>) of the <i>Panĵtan Pāk</i> , [Pole Star] Dhruva was created.	4
It took him 70,000 years to ascend and it will take him the same to descend.	5
Prophet (<i>nabī</i>) Muḥammed is the name of that star and ‘Alī is [his] crown.	6
Around his beautiful neck flashes the brilliant Light (<i>nūr</i>) of Fāṭimah.	7
Bathed in Light (<i>teja</i>) between his two ears are the Imāms Ḥasan and Husayn.	8
From Light (<i>nūr</i>), he created the sky and the seven sub-regions of the earth.	9
He himself made the Divine Seat and Throne ¹ and created the Pen and Tablet. ²	10
Then with the Pen he wrote upon the Tablet the names of the holy saints.	11
Holding it carefully, he inscribed on it those who accepted the religion of <i>Satpanth</i> .	12
It was then that the debt of tithe(<i>dasond</i>) began, paying which brings freedom.	13
Make that offering (<i>dān</i>) from the fruits of your own labours—such is the true tithe.	14
Near and dear to the Lord (<i>nara</i>) is such a one who toils hard [and then gives tithe].	15
The Gurunara has shown you the best sacrifice—perform it, O Pious Ones (<i>munivar</i>)!	16
Then you will attain the other shore (<i>pahale pār</i>) and reign in eternal bliss.	17
Thus spoke Guru Shams the Pīr: All your works will be fulfilled.	18

¹ arasa kursa: Ar. *al-arsh wa-l kursi*.

² loha kalama: Ar. *al-lawh wa-l kalām*.



98
(Garbī No. 20)

The Pīr dances and recites wisdom (<i>ginān</i>)!	
Refrain: O Mother, the Guru explains things thus:	1
Try and understand the signs of truth (<i>sat</i>)!	2
Why have you adopted such false practices!	3
The Guru repeats over and over:	4
Why are all of you being deceived?	5
The Pīr has come to hold your hand.	6
Probe deep for the essence of scripture (<i>veda</i>).	7
Why do you forget this, O Careless Ones!	8
The Pīr is performing a feat today.	9
What is the use if you remain ignorant?	10
O People, serve (<i>sevā</i>) the True Path of <i>Satpanth</i> !	11
Keep your mind firm and steadfast!	12
Abandon that fake idol of yours!	13
Grasp this knowledge this instant!	14
The holy water (<i>pāval</i>) will purify you.	15
You will promptly go to Heaven (<i>vaikuṇṭha</i>).	16
Thus did Guru Shams, the Pīr, speak:	17
Remain steadfast in your hearts.	18



99
(Garbī No. 21)

Listen all you people, followers of the True Path (<i>Satmārga</i>)!	
Refrain: O Mother, Guru Shams is saying this:	1
Arch the essence of scripture (<i>purāṇ</i>) and your mind will be purified.	2
Today you have made merriment with the <i>garbī</i> , but do not be fooled.	3
The gods (<i>deva</i>) and goddesses (<i>devī</i>) entered the True Path—you can verify this!	4
The Yakṣas, Medhas, Kinnars and thirty-three crore deities all attained salvation.	5
That one witnesses them clearly whose mind and deed are pure.	6
Prahlād, Hariścandra and the Pāṇḍavas are all in the True Religion (<i>satdharma</i>).	7
Whose mind is pure and whose heart steadfast can witness them.	8
Those pious ones (<i>rīkhīsar</i>) who are staunch in faith (<i>viśvās</i>), they attained salvation.	9
They are all present at the site of the Ganges ¹ in the pious gathering (<i>gat</i>).	10
Know also that Pīr Ṣadr ʿl-Dīn took twelve crore with him [to Heaven].	11
Those who purify the mind and clasp our hand will witness them.	12
In this last phase, countless will draw strength from Pīr Ḥasan Shāh's name.	13
Pervading the gathering of the Ganges, they fill it night and day with Light.	14
Who enters the religion of <i>Satpanth</i> attains freedom and Divine vision (<i>didār</i>).	15
That man or woman will be saved whose former deeds (<i>pūnya</i>) were pure.	16
The Guru sung this <i>garbī</i> with full voice and made [the truth] manifest.	17
Whoever enters the religion of <i>Satpanth</i> is a servant of God (<i>hari</i>).	18

¹ That is, in the water of the *ghaṭ* ceremony.



100
(Garbī No. 22)

The Guru came to the <i>garbī</i> dance on the tenth night and spoke.	1
He danced untiringly and everybody had a great time.	2
But then one brahmin whose name was Śaṅkar quit the <i>garbī</i> dance.	3
He did not comprehend the Guru's secret (<i>bhed</i>)—that all this was a miracle.	4
Surely mean was his merit of former deeds, for he had thus abandoned Brahmā.	5
Being poor in true merit, what could he realise of [the Guru's] powers!	6
But all the other people of the city came together and they listened.	7
They all knew the Guru's secret—that, in fact, this man was a holy man (<i>devatā</i>).	8
The 35 remaining <i>paṇḍits</i> who were reading the scripture (<i>purāṇ</i>) recognised him.	9
They discarded the <i>Purāṇ</i> to hear the words uttered by the Guru himself.	10
They understood his words of truth (<i>sat</i>) and lodged them firmly in their hearts.	11
The minds of all the <i>paṇḍits</i> were reformed and they reeled in ecstasy.	12
They had understood the various aspects [of truth] described by the Guru.	13
They beat seven drums, blew trumpets and repeated the Guru's speech .	14
Hailing the Guru, they beat their drums over and over again.	15
They hailed him and cried <i>jai! jai!</i> whilst the people looked on.	16
Everybody there was astonished and they all listened very intently indeed.	17
Pīr Shams the Guru said: Listen carefully, all of you!	18



101
(Garbi No. 23)

The Guru spoke his sweet words and everybody listened.	1
Remember the Bow-Wielder lest your souls (<i>jīv</i>) go astray!	2
All of you, men and women, be attentive and listen!	3
Seize upon the religion (<i>dharma</i>) of <i>Satpanth</i> [which is] for the whole world.	4
Be honest in your business dealings and your trade will flourish.	5
Absorb this wisdom (<i>ginān</i>) and bear the religion of <i>Satpanth</i> in your hearts.	6
Understand that subtle secret and drink the holy water (<i>pāval</i>).	7
Give tithe (<i>dasond</i>) and you will be relieved of your accumulated deeds (<i>karma</i>).	8
But give it from the labour of your own bodies, O followers of <i>Satpanth</i> !	9
If you practice such religion in your veins, you will become powerful.	10
Do not go astray over and over again; know the [true] path (<i>mārga</i>)!	11
We have come up to your door; [now] recognise us!	12
We have kept our word (<i>vāc</i>); [now] what have you to say?	13
Countless souls have not yet been saved; why remain with them?	14
Come join those innumerable who have concentrated on religion (<i>dharma</i>).	15
If you earn the truth (<i>haqq</i>), you will attain the abode of Heaven (<i>vaikunṭha</i>).	16
Thus has Pīr Shams spoken: Conduct yourselves with care!	17
Keep firm and steadfast in your heart and give the tithe (<i>dasond</i>).	18



102
(Garbī No. 24)

Then he played the melody of that <i>ginān</i> !	1
Refrain: [Yes] O Mother, Guru Shams performed such a spectacle.	
All the pious ones came and stood there.	2
Then the instruments of religion (<i>dharma</i>) began to play.	3
The shackles of all former deeds (<i>karma</i>) were released.	4
The great kings too came to join in the dance.	5
Leaving behind their lands, they came and stood.	6
Everywhere there was great bliss and rejoicing.	7
In the city, there lived a king.	8
He came to know about the <i>garbī</i> dance.	9
[He heard] that the Bow-Wielder himself was at the <i>garbī</i> .	10
So the king also came to the scene.	11
He was accompanied by an escort of ministers.	12
They all witnessed the art and marvels of the Guru.	13
The residents of the entire city had come and gathered.	14
They were all struck with utter amazement.	15
They came before the Guru and prostrated themselves at his feet.	16
Thus has Pir Shams spoken:	17
O Brothers, be devoted to the True Path (<i>satpanth</i>)!	18



103
(Garbi No. 25)

When the last night arrived, all were gathered in great delight.	1
The Guru had performed endless miracles and all the pious (<i>ṛṣi</i>) were present.	2
The king and his subjects were present and all prostrated themselves at the Guru's feet.	3
They went near Guru Shams and implored him with this request (<i>vinantī</i>).	4
They all said: Impart to us your religion (<i>dharma</i>) , O Guru!	5
So that truth (<i>sat</i>) may release us from our past deeds (<i>karma</i>).	6
The brahmins discarded their <i>Purāṇas</i> and fell prostrate at the Guru's feet.	7
They said: "Guru, show us your religion and we all will follow it.	8
We shall give up all this falsehood and sham for your sake, O Satgur!	9
Now that the three <i>Vedas</i> have no further use for us, you protect us.	10
You, O Guru, are a true Muslim; show us the religion (<i>dīn</i>).	11
We Hindus relinquish our false gods (<i>deva</i>); we worship the religion (<i>dīn</i>).	12
If we plant seeds of goodness in our fields, we will be able to reap the fruit.	13
Give to us your religion (<i>dharma</i>) and we shall preserve it in our hearts.	14
We have cast away these false scriptures (<i>śāstras</i>); show us the <i>Qurʾān</i> .	15
You have brought to us the pure religion and revealed to us its value."	16
Humbly, the brahmins said: "The Guru has indeed shown us great mercy!"	17
Pir Shams then uttered these enduring words—the Guru spoke them himself.	18



104
(Garbī No. 26)

The Guru revealed the path (<i>mārga</i>) to the astray.	1
He brought religion (<i>dharma</i>) to all the brahmins.	2
Thus the king and queen adopted the religion.	3
[So did] all the citizens and creatures of the city.	4
The ascetics (<i>jāṭis</i> and <i>jogīs</i>) abandoned their <i>yoga</i> .	5
They yoked their hearts to the True Religion (<i>satdharma</i>).	6
Similarly, the renunciates (<i>sannyāsīn</i>) left their asceticism (<i>sannyāsa</i>).	7
They led their hearts into the path of the True Path (<i>satpanth</i>).	8
The recluses (<i>vairāgī</i>) left their renunciation (<i>vairāgya</i>).	9
They fixed their minds on the path of <i>Satpanth</i> .	10
All the worshippers (<i>pūjārī</i>) set aside their worship (<i>pūjā</i>).	11
They delighted in the bliss of the path (<i>mārga</i>) of religion.	12
[Sacred] threads of one and a quarter mounds were broken.	13
In the hearts of all, Light (<i>nūr</i>) began to shine.	14
They threw every one of the <i>garbī</i> [pots] into the sea.	15
Then they took instruction in the path of <i>Satpanth</i> .	16
Guru Shams showed mercy and preached.	17
He unlocked the hearts of the wicked and unbelievers alike.	18



105
(Garbī No. 27)

The Guru himself brought the [cups filled with the] holy water (<i>pāval</i>) .	1
He made sure one and all drank from it; indeed, the Pīr was merciful.	2
By drinking this nectar (<i>amīras</i>), they were all purified by the True Path (<i>satpanth</i>).	3
The Lord (<i>nara</i>) Qāsim Shāh himself came and gave his beneficent vision (<i>didār</i>).	4
In the city there was great rejoicing and everybody sang [the Guru's] <i>gināns</i> .	5
He appointed the head (<i>mukhī</i>) of the gathering (<i>gat</i>) and all gave offerings (<i>dān</i>).	6
All gave the exact offering of tithe (<i>dasond</i>) and became purified and pious (<i>munivar</i>).	7
“O Guru, you have been truly merciful! You led countless of us to [salvation]”.	8
All those who lived in that city, their works were successful.	9
O Brother, they will enjoy the reign of eternal bliss in the City of Immortality.	10
Those who having known and witnessed this and yet err, they will not attain that state.	11
Errant, such are denied liberation (<i>mukti</i>) and they meander from house to house.	12
And those who accept the religion (<i>dharma</i>) of <i>Saṭpanth</i> but still do not practice it –	13
On their heads befall a heavy load of <i>karma</i> ; they will be dumped in hell.	14
O my Brother, be devoted to the religion so you may attain the other shore(<i>pahle pār</i>).	15
If your earnings are honest and pure, you will enter the gates of Heaven (<i>svarga</i>).	16
Such a <i>garbī</i> [song] Pīr Shams, the Guru, himself has sung.	17
O Believers (<i>mu'min</i>), attain the divine vision (<i>didār</i>) and your sins will vanish!	18



106
(Garbi Nō. 28)

This <i>garbī</i> completes the cycle of <i>garbīs</i> —Guru Shams has spoken his thoughts.	1
Who listens to them with single mind will gain a thousandfold merit (<i>puṇya</i>).	2
Man or woman, whoever sings them will attain the other shore (<i>pahele pār</i>).	3
Whoever sings the <i>garbīs</i> of <i>Satpanth</i> will be relieved of all repentance.	4
Listen truly, O Man and Woman! Such false festivity has been costly for you.	5
You will attain Heaven (<i>vaikuṇṭha</i>) only if you sing the <i>garbīs</i> steadily.	6
Singing <i>garbīs</i> and cherishing the religion (<i>dharma</i>) will free you of ages of sin.	7
Seventy-one ancestors of those will be saved who hear the <i>garbīs</i> of <i>Satpanth</i> .	8
One who has kept steadfast faith (<i>viśvās</i>) will indeed be a true devotee (<i>dās</i>) of ‘Alī.	9
Those devotees of ‘Alī who sing [<i>garbīs</i>] will attain the abode of Heaven (<i>vaikuṇṭha</i>).	10
Whoever recites them on a Friday night will gain the state of Immortality (<i>amara</i>).	11
Be honest and sincere in purpose, O Brother, and your earnings will be true.	12
O Pious (<i>rīkhīsar</i>)! Be patient and steadfast in your hearts, said Guru Shams, the Pīr.	13
The Pīr had made a promise (<i>kol</i>) and he came—see how he showed them the path!	14
After gaining such understanding, if you lose enthusiasm do not blame the Pīr.	15
The Pīr has explained this word by word to those who accepted <i>Satpanth</i> .	16
They were saved, man and woman, when Pīr Shams uttered his thoughts.	17
This <i>garbī</i> [cycle] is now complete; verily, it is the true speech (<i>vāc</i>) of the Guru!	18



APPENDIX A

A Short Life-History of our 23rd Pīr— Ḥaḍrat Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī¹

Ḥaḍrat Pīr Shams al-Dīn was born in the town Sabzawār. His father's name was Ḥaḍrat Pīr Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and his mother's name was Fāṭimah bīn Sayyid Abd al-Hādī.

Our 29th Imām, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Imām Shāh Qāsim Shāh appointed Pīr Shams al-Dīn as *pīr* and ordered him to preach wisdom and spread the Ismāʿīlī faith in lands outside Iran. Kissing the hand of the Imām, he left with his blessings and arrived at Badakhshān where he began his duty to preach. Revealing the Imām of the time (*zamānā nā imām*) to the people, he accepted their allegiance to Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Imām Shāh Qāsim Shāh on his behalf and initiated them into the religion of Ismāʿīlism.

From Badakhshān he passed through Ghazni, Cīnab and other towns, and trekking through the Hindukush and Pāmīr mountain ranges, he reached Kashmir. At every town that he passed through, he kept up his duty of preaching. During his journey, he endured many troubles and afflictions. Suffering hunger and thirst, he arrived in India (Hindustān) where, in order to teach and preach, he had to learn and master many different Indian dialects.

One day, he came to a town called Anal where he found Hindus singing *garbīs* on the occasion of Daserā. Pīr Shams al-Dīn mixed in with them and began to sing his own *garbīs*. These *garbīs* were filled to the brim with the philosophy of Ismāʿīlism and the

¹ This is a translation of the introduction to Pīr Shams that is given in the Gujarati edition of the Anthology. The title of the Gujarati version is āpanā trevisamā pīr hazarat pīr shamsudīn sabzawārīnuṅ tūṅk jīvan vṛatāṅt. The author of this piece is not stated in the Saṅgraha. The translation given here is mine.



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revelation of the Imām of the time. Over ten days, he sang twenty-eight *garbīs*. Their effect was so profound that the local *paṇḍits* hurriedly wrote them down, and countless Hindus discarded their sacred threads (*janoi*) which piled up into a huge mound at the feet of Pīr Shams al-Dīn. [Then], accepting the faith of Islam, they all gave allegiance to the Imām of the time, Imām Qāsim Shāh.

In the same village, there lived a pious woman by the name of Emnābāī. She too was inspired with feelings of devotion for the *pīr* and invited him to dine at her home. The master, Pīr Shams al-Dīn, accepted her request and entered her house to eat. When the meal was laid before Pīr Shams al-Dīn, however, he refused to eat the food. To test Emnābāī, he said, “We do not want this cooking! We shall eat only if you cook a meal with water that has been fetched in an unbaked pot drawn up from the water-well with a rope made of raw cotton.” Emnābāī was faithful (*imānī*) and she followed Pīr Shams al-Dīn's instructions. She fetched water from the well, and then cooked and fed him. Pīr Shams al-Dīn was greatly pleased with this [proof of] devotion and gave Emnābāī many blessings. Thus, Emnābāī passed the test.

In the year 715 A.H., Pīr Shams al-Dīn went to the delightful land of Kashmir to preach when a band of ruffians belonging to a tribe called Caṅgaḍ captured him with ropes (made of cactus). Pīr Shams al-Dīn, however, showed no fear toward these people and prayed before the presence of God Almighty. Immediately, a change came over them and they all sought Pīr Shams al-Dīn's protection. The Caṅgaḍ tribe numbered some two lakh strong and they all became followers of Pīr Shams al-Dīn. Thereafter, other citizens of Kashmir also became followers in great numbers among whom could also be found [some of] its kings.

In this way, Pīr Shams al-Dīn spread the teachings of the *da‘wah* in Tibet, Kashmir, Gilān, Yārkand, Askard, Punjab, Multān and other countries and showed the people the true path of the Ismā‘īlī faith; to a few special individuals, he also gave guidance about the “divine secret” or the “divine essence.”

However, the major portion of Pīr Shams al-Dīn's followers were the Hindus, especially the people known as Cakkas who were famous for their heroism and splendour, and whose chiefs had reigned over Kashmir and the Punjab for about 280 years.



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In those times, as a result of the king's oppressive orders to his provincial governors, Pīr Shams al-Dīn and his Ismā'īlī followers suffered endless hardships. To safeguard their lives and possessions, Pīr Shams al-Dīn had to change his method of spreading the *da'wah*, and instead preached his message in disguise. The Hindus called this path the Shamsi sect (*šamsī mat*) and its followers believed Ḥaḍrat 'Alī to be the incarnation (*mazhar*) of God Almighty.

Giving [religious] guidance to this region in such manner, Pīr Shams al-Dīn eventually reached Karachi and from there he proceeded to Multān.

In Multān, he took up residence in an ancient mosque where a group of people had gathered to pray. He joined the group for prayer and the *imām* leading the prayer began. In the middle of the prayer, Pīr Shams al-Dīn suddenly sat down. Once the prayer was over, people rushed to the *pīr* demanding an explanation for his irreverent attitude. Pīr Shams al-Dīn gestured to them to sit down and said that, "As long as the *imām* who led the prayer was remembering Allah, I performed the prayer with him, but I sat down in the middle of the prayer when his attention strayed from Allah's recollection and idly wandered to other places." Everyone was astonished by this answer. They urged him, "Please stand forward as the *imām* who leads the prayer and make us pray." The *pīr* consented to their request. As the prayer commenced, lights came alive in all their hearts and when those in prayer bowed, the minarets of the mosque began to bow too. Witnessing this, the people became frightened and midway through the prayer fled outside the mosque. When Pīr Shams al-Dīn completed his prayer and came out, the people asked, "What happened?" In reply, Pīr Shams al-Dīn recited the following verse of a *gīnān* :

My mind is the prayer-mat and the judge; and my body is my mosque;
Sitting in it, I perform the *namāz*; indeed, [is there one] who knows my submission?

After hearing the above words, their hearts became filled with respect for Pīr Shams al-Dīn. But when the Ṣūfī of Multān, Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyya, heard about this incident, he began to fear for his fame. Thus, he ordered his staunch disciple Khān Muḥammad Seyyid Hākīm Shahīd to make sure that Pīr Shams al-Dīn would not be able to enter Multān by hauling in all the rafts and boats on to the city's shore. And thus it was done. When Pīr Shams al-Dīn arrived at the river bank and did not see any boats, he constructed one from a piece of paper. Sitting in it, he asked his companions to hold on



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to his fingers and the boat began to move, but it unsteadily lurched to and fro. Seeing this, he asked: "Is there anyone who carries material possessions?" Shāh-zādah Muḥammad presented him his mother's jewelry which she had given him for his journey. The *pīr* threw it into the water and the boat began to glide forward smoothly. Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyya was sitting in the balcony of his palace when his eyes fell upon a boat that was half-way across the river. He promptly swore for it to stop dead in its tracks and the boat abruptly came to a halt. Pīr Shams al-Dīn peered in all four directions to search for the cause of this event and then he saw Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyya sitting in his balcony. Immediately, he understood the gist of the situation and cast a glance towards Bahā' al-Dīn. When this divine glance fell upon him, two horns burst forth from Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyya's temple and his head got stuck in the balcony. The boat began to move forward at full speed. Bahā' al-Dīn was petrified by this miraculous feat and dispatched his sons Ṣadr al-Dīn and Shaykh al-Dīn to Pīr Shams al-Dīn to ask for forgiveness. Pīr Shams al-Dīn arrived at the ancient mosque before the two got there. They prostrated at his feet and pleaded for mercy. Accepting their imploring pleas, Pīr Shams al-Dīn recited a prayer on behalf of their father and the horns on Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyya's head disappeared. However, the marks left by the horns have remained imprinted upon his progeny. The balcony where Bahā' al-Dīn sat still exists in Multān.

During the time that Pīr Shams al-Dīn resided in Multān, it so happened that one by one, the sons of its ruler began to die. The king could not control his grief. He summoned all the saints, ṣūfīs and learned men, and said: "It is your calling that you are close to God Almighty, and thus have I showered you with many priceless favours and gifts. So today, in return I wish you to revive my son. If you are truly near God, you will be able to accomplish this task. If you fail in it, surely I will crush you up in the oil-mill."

Hearing this, they could not contain their fears and they rushed to Pīr Shams al-Dīn, pleading him to rescue them from the mouth of death. Pīr Shams al-Dīn felt pity on them and consenting to their request, arrived by the side of the dead prince. Gazing at the corpse, he said: "*kum be-iḍhan allāh!*" which means "By the command of Allah, Rise!" But this had no effect, so the *pīr* said again, "*kum be-iḍhanī!*" which means "Rise by my command!" Immediately the prince came alive.



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The king was supremely delighted by this miracle. However, since the learned men had been forced to look down in shame, they issued an order (*fatwā*) charging that Pīr Shams al-Dīn was sinful for having accomplished this feat by his own command and not by the will of God. They decreed that by religious law, the punishment for this sin was to be as follows: to strip off the *pīr*'s skin while he was still alive. This injunction turned the people against the *pīr*, but as Pīr Shams al-Dīn was a divine personage capable of miracles, he promptly covered his body with a black blanket and by his own hand, peeled the skin off his body and threw it before the learned men. Seeing this, everyone was stunned and began to tremble. Yet, even after this scene, since he had been branded a sinner by the *fatwā*, and due to the religious command against having any relations or contact with him, people did not associate with the *pīr*.

After a great deal of time had elapsed, Pīr Shams al-Dīn, suffering from hunger, begged the people for some food. However, nobody paid any attention to him. A butcher took heart and gave him a piece of meat. Pīr Shams al-Dīn began to ponder on how he would cook the meat. Taking it along with him, he went outside the city of Multān and, by his own powers, brought the sun down to cook it. The people of Multān began to sizzle under the sun's unbearable heat and many of them scurried to the *pīr*, fell at his feet and begged for forgiveness. The *pīr* was merciful, and since by this time the piece of meat had been cooked, he ordered the sun to go back to its original place which it did. The site at which the sun descended was henceforth called Suryakand. It exists even now, and each year a huge festival is celebrated there.

Pīr Shams al-Dīn then arrived in Kashmir where there was a large sect that worshipped the sun. As long as the sun shone, they were absorbed in prayer and other religious ceremonies, but once the sun had set, they were not afraid of committing sinful deeds. For, these people believed that when it was dark, the sun was asleep and could not see their sins, and therefore, sins committed in darkness were not to be counted as sins. The *pīr* enlightened these deluded people and showed them the true path of the Ismā'īlī faith. They came to be known as the Shamsīs.

At present, the Shamsīs in the Punjab, who are very great in number, [are descendants of those who] were originally enlightened by Pīr Shams al-Dīn and [now] they openly practice the Ismā'īlī faith. In order to spread the Ismā'īlī faith, the master, Pīr Shams al-Dīn, endured all kinds of obstacles. In India, wherever he went to give wisdom, he



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composed *gināns* and *garbīs* in beautiful language to disclose the true religion, thus winning many followers.

Pir Shams al-Dīn was married to Bibi Ḥāfīzah Jamāl, the daughter of his uncle Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn. She bore him two sons: Ḥaḍrat Naṣīr al-Dīn and Ḥaḍrat Sayyid Aḥmad Zindāpīr. When Pīr Shams al-Dīn departed this temporal world, the Imām of the time entrusted the title and position of *pīr* upon his son, Naṣīr al-Dīn, who is our 24th *pīr*. His name is cited in the genealogy of the *pīrs* as Pīr Naṣīr al-Dīn.

During his service of Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Imām Shāh Qāsim Shāh, Pīr Shams al-Dīn lived for a long time in the town called Tabrīz. This is why he is often known as Pīr Shams al-Dīn Tabrīzī. Moreover, as he was born in the town Sabzawār, he is also known as Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī. The people of Egypt and Syria know him as Shams Maghribī. After he had lived in Kashmir, he was also called Shams al-Dīn Irāqī. In the *duʿā*, he is addressed as Pīr Shams Coṭā.

Here, it is extremely important to clarify that the great Ṣūfī saint Ḥaḍrat Ṣhams Tabrīzī who was Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's spiritual guide, and who lived during the time of our 28th Imām, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Imām Shāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, was not the same person who was our 23rd *pīr*, Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī, who was also called Pīr Shams Tabrīzī. These were two different individuals. Pīr Shams al-Dīn died in Multān in the year 757 A.H.

Even today, we still sing the *gināns* and *garbīs* composed by Pīr Shams al-Dīn with great devotional fervour. In addition to their insightful verses and their lofty philosophy of the Ismāʿīlī faith, these *gināns* and *garbīs* are saturated with the complete and clear-cut teachings on the obedience to and recognition of the Imām of the time. After reading this short life-history of Pīr Shams al-Dīn and studying his *gināns*, it is essential that the teachings expressed in them be put into practice in life so that our faith remains strong and firm. [We pray] that we should be able to gain a true understanding of the Ismāʿīlī faith; that we should have no hesitation in obeying the orders of the Imām of the time; and that the living Imām, Mawlānā Ṣultān Muḥammad Shāh Dātār, should perpetually keep alive in each one of us feelings of loyalty. May Mawlā bless every Ismāʿīlī with true guidance. Āmīn. Ṣalawāt.



APPENDIX B

Notes on Names and Epithets in the Anthology¹

1. MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES

Ambarīṣa: A king of Ayodhyā who visited the sage Tricitmuni. The latter insisted on having his son Suse as the sacrificial animal. However, the sacrifice was interrupted by Indra who rescued the sacrificial victim who extolled Indra and Viṣṇu at the stake. Suse had learnt Vedic hymns from his uncle Viśvamitra. Also, an appellation of Śiva; the name of one of eighteen hells.

Arjuna: Third of the Pāṇḍava* princes. Son of Indra and Droṇa's favourite pupil. Earned Draupadī as his wife when he won the contest of strength in her *swayamvara* (a public event where a princess chooses her husband from an assembly of suitors). It was to Arjuna that Kṛṣṇa, his charioteer, related the Bhagavad Gītā at the battle-scene with the Kauravas* in Kurukṣetra.

Asura: Antagonists of the Suras.* Consist of several classes of which the most frequently mentioned are *daitya*,* *dānava*,* *dāsyu*, *nāga*, and *rākṣasa*.* Asuras dwell in mountain caves and in Pātāla, the lower depths of the earth. Skilled in sorcery and magic, they transform themselves into any form and terrify humans with their awful roaring.

Avatāra: “descent”: incarnation or appearance of a deity; associated especially with Viṣṇu. The capacity of divine beings to manifest themselves by virtue of their creative power, *māyā*.* Viṣṇu incarnates in order to preserve righteousness.

¹ The annotation of Personal Names has been divided into three groups a) mythological b) historical or c) local names. Names and terms are listed in their Sanskrit or Arabic forms, or as they appear in the translations.



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Thus, when the earth is overwhelmed with evil and suffering, his salvific power manifests itself in *avatāras*. In Bhagavad Gitā IV 7-8, Viṣṇu promises to come forth from age to age to protect the good and destroy evil when *dharma** declines.

Bali/Balirājā: Descendant of the demon Hiranyakaśipu.* A *daitya** king who defeated Indra through penance and thus won rule over three worlds. The gods were mortified and appealed to Viṣṇu who came to their rescue as Vāmana,* the dwarf *avatāra*. Begging the proud king to grant him a mere three steps of land, which the latter carelessly gave, Viṣṇu then assumed his real stature and stepped over the heaven and earth in two strides; Bali had to take the third on his head and hence descended into the infernal region of hell, Pātāla, where he was spared to rule out of respect due to his virtuous ancestor Prahlāda.*

Bhavānī (mātā): “mother goddess”; one of Śiva's consorts; his female energy, *śakti*, which consists in two opposite natures, mild and ferocious. The female principle is worshipped especially under the ferocious form as Durgā, “inaccessible”, Kālī, “black” and Bhairavī, “terrible, fearful.” The Tāntrikas in particular celebrate her powers and seek her favours. She is also known as *kanyā-kumārī**, “youthful virgin” and *satī**, “pure, virtuous.”

Bhīma/Bhīma Sena: “the terrible”; second of the five Pāṇḍava* princes and son of Vāyu, God of Wind. A man colossal in size of daunting strength and voracious appetite. Brave, crude in manners, and fierce-tempered as a foe, Bhīma's favourite weapon was the club. He played a prominent role in the battle of Kurukṣetra where he avenged Draupadī* by slaying Duṣṣāsana who had insulted her and on the last day of battle, unfairly defeated the chief of the Kauravas,* Duryodhana.*

Brahmā: Creator; first god of the Hindu triad manifesting the impersonal Brahman's three aspects: Brahmā (creator), Viṣṇu,* (preserver) and Śiva (destroyer). An epithet of Brahmā is *adikartā*, “fashioner of all things.” He is also referred to as Mānasa or Puruṣa, the Primeval Man. In many instances, Brahmā is confused with Brahman, the Universal Principle.



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Buddha: “enlightened, awakened”; a title or honorific meaning wise or learned man, sage, one who is fully enlightened and has achieved perfection or truth. Applied specifically to a *kṣatriya* prince in Northern India called Siddhārata, son of King Śuddhodhana of the Gautama clan who became known as the sage of the Śākyas, *śākyamuni*, and founded a religion (that was later called Buddhism) around the 6th Century BCE. The central teachings of the Buddha, captured in his Four Noble Truths, are that all life is suffering and there is no permanent self. He prescribed a way out of suffering through The Eightfold Path.

Cāṇūra: A wrestler and demon friend of King Kāṁsa* who was killed by Kṛṣṇa.* Kṛṣṇa whirled him around a hundred times till he choked and then dashed him against the ground so violently that his body was smashed into a hundred pieces.

Daitya/Dāṇava: A class or race of Asuras:* demons, giants, monsters and ogres. They dwell in cavernous regions of the earth, are skilled in sorcery and magic and enjoy interfering with sacrifices and warring with the Devas.*

Das Avatāra: “ten descents”; by the 11th century C.E., the typical list of Viṣṇu's manifestations had been stereotyped in Vaiṣṇavism into ten *avatāras* as follows: Matsya* (fish), Kūrma* (Tortoise), Varāha* (boar), Narasiṁha* (man-lion), Vāmana* (dwarf), Paraśurāma* (axe-wielding Rāma), Rāma* (hero of the Rāmāyana), Kṛṣṇa* (beloved of gopīs), Buddha* (founder of the ‘false’ religion of Buddhism) and Kalki* (last incarnation expected at the end of Kalyug*).

Daśāsana: Name of Rāvaṇa* the twenty-armed and ten-faced demon king of Lāṅkā who abducted Sītā,* Rāma's wife.

Deva: Gods, deities, divine celestial beings, spoken of as thirty-three crore in number, eleven for each realm; also applied as an epithet to pious, righteous, godly men.

Devadutta: Name of Indra's* trumpet, *śaṅkha*.



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Dharma/Dharmarāja: Yama,* god who ministers justice to the dead. An epithet of Yudhiṣṭhira,* eldest of the Pāṇḍava brothers and mythical son of Dharma, god of Justice.

Dhruva: “immovable, firm, fixed”. Though a kṣatriya, Dhruva renounced the world because of the tauntings of his step-mother Suruci and through his penance and steadfast will, became a great ṛṣi who obtained from Viṣṇu* the boon of immortality. Viṣṇu elevated him to the skies immortalizing him as the Pole Star. His epithet is *grahadhāra*, “pivot of the planets.”

Draupadī: Daughter of Draupada, King of Pañcāla. Wife of the five Pāṇḍava* princes won by Arjuna* during her *svayamvara*. While Arjuna was her favourite, it was to Bhīma* that she turned for help when the Pāṇḍu brothers lost her and their kingdom in a game of dice with the Kauravas.* Duṣṣāsana mocked her as their slave, and dragging her by her hair, tore off her *sari* while Duryodhana taunted her to sit on his thigh. Showing mercy on her, Kṛṣṇa restored her garment as soon as it was ripped off, thus preserving her dignity. Bhīma swore he would avenge her and Draupadī vowed not to tie her hair until Bhīma had wet it with Duṣṣāsana's blood. She accompanied her husband during their thirteen years of exile during which time she bore untold suffering and humiliation on their behalf.

Duryodhana: Eldest son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, uncle of the Pāṇḍavas;* head of the Kauravas,* he was intensely jealous of his cousins, the five Pāṇḍava brothers and thus plotted to destroy them through a game of dice. The Pāṇḍavas were defeated and lost all their wealth and kingdom, including their wife Draupadī.* However, at the battle of Kurukṣetra, Bhīma* killed Duryodhana* and the Pāṇḍava's regained the sovereignty of which the Kaurava's had cheated them.

Gautama: The Buddha* is often called by his *gotra* name, Gautama. Name of a great ṛṣi Śaradvata whose beautiful wife Ahalyā was seduced by Indra;* the god assumed Gautama's form when the latter was away from his hermitage and seduced his wife. Gautama discovered her infidelity and expelled her from his dwelling depriving her as well of her handsome form.



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Govinda: “cowherd”; epithet of Kṛṣṇa from his times among the herdsmen and *gopis* in Vṛndāvana.

Hariścandra: An imperial sage, the son of Triśaṅku, virtuous king of the Solar dynasty, Hariścandra was the embodiment of truth, justice and steadfastness of word. There are several legends about him, the most famous of which relates the terrible suffering and humiliations he endured at the hands of the sage Viśvāmītra who demanded from him his country, son, wife and his own life as sacrificial gift to atone for disturbing Viśvāmītra during an experiment with the Sciences. Hariścandra, destitute and shorn of all possessions, attempted to escape to Benares, but his relentless oppressor was there waiting for the rest of his gift. His wife and child were sold to a *caṇḍāla* and he himself was assigned the lowly duty of stealing grave-cloths from the cemetery. Ultimately, the gods took pity on him and raised him to heaven where Hariścandra insisted on taking along his faithful subjects. However, prompted by the sage Nārada to boast of his merits, he and his people were expelled from there. He immediately repented, and his fall was arrested in mid-air, where he and his subjects dwell to this day.

Hiraṇyakaśipu: “golden-robed”; a demon king, son of Diti and Kaśyapa, of immense wealth and power, who through his penance obtained from Śiva sovereignty over the three worlds for a million years. He was assured by Brahmā* that no man, animal or created being could kill him and thus took every chance to increase his wealth and power, finally usurping Indra's* throne. He resented his son Prahlād* for worshipping Viṣṇu* and cruelly persecuted him. To rescue Prahlād from his father's persecutions, Viṣṇu assumed his form as the Man-lion *avatāra* Narasiṃha* and mercilessly tore Hiraṇyakaśipu to pieces.

Indra: God of the firmament and guardian of the eastern quarter who rides the Golden Chariot and whose weapon is the thunderbolt (*vajra*). Chief of the gods in the Vedas to whom many hymns are addressed. Reigning over Svarga* and its capital Amarāvati, heavenly dwelling of gods and celestial being, he is also the god of the weather and fertility.



Kaiṭabha: One of the two demons who issued forth from the root of Viṣṇu's* ear while the latter was asleep. With the other demon, Madhu,* he planned to kill Brahmā* who was seated on a lotus on Viṣṇu's navel. Viṣṇu awoke in time to save Brahmā and destroy them. Another story in the Mahābhārata relates that the two demons stole the Vedas from Brahmā who appealed to Viṣṇu for help. Viṣṇu manifested himself as Hayaśirṣa, the horse-headed *avatāra*, and killed the two demons after retrieving the Vedas from the bottom of the sea where they had hidden them. Hence, Viṣṇu is also called Madhusūdana and Kaiṭabhyajita.

Kālī: "black". Hideous in appearance, fang-toothed, emaciated, skulls in hand, Kālī is the goddess of time, fierce and bloody consort of Śiva, personification of his female energy *śakti*. She is also named Durgā, Mātā Bhavānī, etc. and, in the mystical Tāntric tradition, she represents the supreme realisation of truth. As symbol of eternal time, she is both the giver and taker of life.

Kaliṅga: Name of a kingdom on the east coast of India north of Madras derived from the monarchy that ruled it. The Kaliṅgas were descendants of Anu and constituted one of several classes of Asuras* or demons.

Kalki: The tenth and final *avatāra* of Viṣṇu* which will become manifest at the end of Kalyug,* the last age of darkness, strife and untruth. Mounted on a white horse and he wields a drawn, razor-edged sword as the destroyer of evil. Appearing at the end of the fourth age, he will punish the wicked, comfort the virtuous, re-establish the golden age of righteousness and then bring the world to an end.

Kāmadhenu: Mythical cow who grants every wish belonging to the sage Vasiṣṭha. She was produced when the gods churned the ocean in search for *amṛta*, the nectar of Immortality. The cow of plenty, she stands for abundance, prosperity, motherhood, nature and regeneration.

Kaṁsa: Eldest son of Ugrasena, tyrannical King of Mathura, step-brother of Kṛṣṇa's mother Devakī and incarnation of the demon Kālenemi. When astrologers forecast that Kaṁsa would be killed by Devakī's son, he imprisoned her and her husband Vasudeva, killing their first six children. The seventh child Baladeva was miraculously transferred from Devakī's womb to that of Rohini and when



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the eighth child Kṛṣṇa* was born, they were all secretly smuggled out to Gokula. Kāṁsa ordered all male infants to be massacred, but Kṛṣṇa escaped. He persecuted Kṛṣṇa at every turn, but was finally killed by Kṛṣṇa in a contest staged by him to destroy Kṛṣṇa.

Karṇa: Illegitimate son of Kuntī by the sun god Sūrya whom she abandoned on Yamunā to escape social stigma before her marriage to Pāṇḍu. Karṇa was brought up by a poor childless couple, and became a skilled bowman and charioteer equal to none other than his rival and half-brother Arjuna.* However, since he was ostensibly of lowly origin and not of noble lineage, his participation at Draupadī's *svayamvara* was disqualified although he was able to take up and bend the bow that no other warrior had been able to draw save Arjuna. When Arjuna was thus declared the winner of the *svayamvara*, Karṇa joined ranks with the Kauravas. Knowing he would be a valuable ally in their conflict with the Pāṇḍavas,* Duryodhana* made him King of Aṅga, but in the end he was killed by Arjuna in the battle of Kurukṣetra.

Kaurava: Patronymic name of the descendants of Kuru. Specifically refers to the hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, blind brother of Pāṇḍu who was ruler and father of the five Pāṇḍava* princes. When Pāṇḍu died, Dhṛtarāṣṭra ascended the throne and took the latter's sons under his care, ensuring that they along with his own sons received training in the art of warfare under the supervision of the brahmin *ācāryas* Bhīṣma and Droṇa. The Mahābhārata narrates the story of the enmity and war among the jealous sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra led by his eldest son Duryodhana* and their cousins the five Pāṇḍava brothers, which culminates in the battle of Kurukṣetra.

Keśava: Name of Kṛṣṇa* or Viṣṇu.* Various interpretations have been suggested for this name: "long-haired;" slayer of demon Keśin; "radiant" from Skt. *keśa* – light.

Kṛṣṇa: "black; dark-complexioned". The eighth of Viṣṇu's* *avatāras* considered to be the direct and full manifestation of Viṣṇu himself, Kṛṣṇa is the most celebrated, important and beloved of Indian deities. A Yādava prince, son of Devakī and Vasudeva, his life-story is variously told in the Mahābhārata, the Bhāgavata



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Purāṇa and Harivamsa. Favourite of the *gopīs* of Gokula, slayer of his uncle Kaṁsa,* charioteer of Arjuna* at the battle of Kurukṣetra, the figure of Kṛṣṇa forms the subject of a vast, vivid number of legends and myths.

Kinnar: Celestial musicians who dwell in Kuvera's heaven, these mythical beings have the form of man and the head of horse. Together with the Gandharvas (celestial singers) and Apsaras (celestial nymphs), they provide entertainment at the banquets of the gods.

Kumbhakarṇa: lit. "pot-eared". A Rākṣasa and the monstrous brother of the demon king Rāvaṇa* who was cursed by Brahmā* to sleep for six months and awaken for a single day only to slumber again. This turned out to be a boon for the *ṛṣis* and *apsaras*, the food which Kumbha gorged himself on when he awoke. He was beheaded by Rāma.*

Kūrma: "tortoise". Form assumed by Viṣṇu* during Satyuga,* the first age, to help recover the precious *amṛta*, elixir of Immortality that was lost in a deluge. Placing himself at the bottom of the sea of milk, the gods used him as the base on which to pivot Mt. Mandara around which they twisted the serpent Vāsuki and churned the ocean until it yielded the cherished object.

Madhu: q.v. Kaiṭabha

Mandodarī: "narrow-waisted". Beautiful daughter of Māyā, architect of Asuras.* Rāvaṇa's favourite wife who bore him a son, Indrajīt. Considered to be one of the five *satīs*.*

Matsya: "Fish". In one telling of the myth, Viṣṇu* incarnated himself as a fish to save Vaivasvata, the seventh Manu and patriarch of the human race, from an impending deluge that would destroy the world. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Viṣṇu takes the form of a fish to rescue the Vedas from Hayagrīva, a horse-necked demon who stole them from the mouth of Brahmā while the latter was asleep. When Brahmā finally awoke, Viṣṇu restored them to him and killed Hayagrīva.



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Māyā: “illusion, deception, magic, supernatural power”. Personified as the goddess who beguiles beings with her enchanting powers. Durgā is sometimes identified as the goddess of spells who personifies the unreality of created things.

Madhā: “intelligence, wisdom”. Personified as wife of Dharma and daughter of Dakṣa.

Mugḍala: A Vedic ṛṣi who lived a life of piety, poverty and restraint. Noted for generously offering hospitality to thousands of brahmins, his meagre resource of grain never diminished when required. The sage Durvāsas was so impressed that he gave Mugḍala the chance to enter heaven in bodily form but the ṛṣi declined preferring instead to devote himself to practicing austerities and the ascetic virtues of indifference and fixed concentration by which he ultimately gained his aim, the state of supreme perfection (*nirvāṇa*).

Mura: A great demon with 7000 sons. He assisted Naraka, ruler of Prāg-jyotiṣa, in defending his city against Kṛṣṇa who chopped off his head and burnt his 7000 sons with the flame blazing at the edge of his discus. Hence, Kṛṣṇa is also called Murārī—slayer of Mura.

Murārī: Epithet of Kṛṣṇa.

Nāga: “snake, serpent;” also called *sarpa*. Semi-divine beings, mythical serpents who are guardians of the wealth in the depths of the earth. Viṣṇu's favourite symbol, his couch is the serpent Ananta, also called Śeṣa and Vāsuki. The Nāgas reign in Pātāla, the region below the earth, where they flourish in great number.

Nakalaṅkī : q. v. Kalki*

Nakula: Son of Mādri, mythical son of Aśvin, second wife of King Pāṇḍu, youngest of the five Pāṇḍava brothers and twin brother of Sahadeva* who became a skilled and acclaimed horse-trainer.

Narasimha: “man-lion”. Fourth incarnation of Viṣṇu* as half-man, half-lion who slew the demon Hiranyakaśipu,* who by Brahmā's* favour was invulnerable



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to god, man or beast and who could not be killed by day or night, indoors or outdoors. Incensed by his son Prahlaḍa's* worship of Viṣṇu, Hiranya relentlessly persecuted him and even tried to kill him. Taunting his son's belief in Viṣṇu's omnipotence and omnipresence, he once struck a stone pillar in his hall and demanded to see Viṣṇu. To avenge Prahlaḍa and vindicate his own majesty, Viṣṇu came forth from the pillar and tore the arrogant demon to pieces.

Nārada: Name of a mythical ṛṣi to whom a few hymns of the Ṛg Veda are ascribed. Inspirer of poets, counsellor of kings and messenger between men and gods, he is the patron of music and inventor of the stringed musical instrument called *vīna*. He is the priest and seer who forewarned the demon Karmṣa* of his death by his sister's son Kṛṣṇa.*

Pāṇḍava: The five sons of King Pāṇḍu called Yudhiṣṭhira,* Bhīma,* Arjuna* (by his first wife Kuntī) and twins Nakula* and Sahadeva* (by his second wife Mādri), the chief protagonists in the Mahābhārata which describes the battle between the Pāṇḍava brothers and their first cousins, the Kauravas.* King Pāṇḍu, the son of the sage Vyāsa, King of Hastināpūra and brother of blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra, was cursed by a sage that he would die during intercourse. Hence, he gave himself up to religious austerities and practiced strict continence, urging his wives to conceive his children through adulterous union with other gods. Thus, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons taunted the Pāṇḍava brothers for being illegitimate sons of Pāṇḍu and this marked the beginning of their life-long conflict.

Paraśurāma: "Rāma of the Axe". Sixth incarnation of Viṣṇu,* brahmin son of sage Jamadagni and his wife Renukā, whose steadfast worship of Śiva earned from him the reward of the magic battle axe, *paraśu*. Once, when his father was away, the thousand armed king of Haihayas, Kārtavīrya, paid a visit to his hermitage where he was respectfully received by the sage's wife. However, Kārtavīrya's intentions were evil, and after abducting her and Kāmadhenu,* Jamadagni's sacred cow acquired through great penance, he desecrated the hermitage. Paraśurāma was furious and pursued the king, slaughtered him like an animal and cleared the earth of his Kṣatriya race twenty-one times.



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Prahlāda: Son of *daitya* king Hiranyakaśipu, father of the arrogant king Bali* and pious devotee of Viṣṇu who was incarnated as Narasiṃha to save Prahlāda from his cruel father. Despite his father's terrifying attempts to destroy Prahlāda, the latter's devotion to Viṣṇu remained singular and unyielding and his earnest worship of Viṣṇu obtained him ultimate release.

Rākṣasa: Hideous, bloodthirsty and repellent demons and fiends who haunt cemeteries, animate the dead, devour human flesh, interrupt sacrifices or place obstacles to prevent offerings to the gods, harass the devout and pious, and vex mankind in every possible way. Their king is Rāvaṇa.*

Rāma: Rāmacandra: “moon among men.” The eldest son of Daśāratha, King of Kosala who ruled from his capital Ayodhyā, Rāma is the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa composed by the sage Vālmiki, which recounts the story of his unfair exile orchestrated by his step-mother Kaikeyī and the trials and tribulations he suffered in the Daṇḍaka forest with his loyal wife, Sītā*. It describes his war with the demon king Rāvaṇa* of Laṅkā who abducted Sītā and his ascension to the throne after rescuing her. While in Vālmiki, Rāma is portrayed as the epitome of a brave and righteous prince, by the time of the Purāṇas and later rescensions, he has been raised to the status of an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu,* second only to Kṛṣṇa in importance.

Rāvaṇa: Demon king of Laṅkā, half-brother of Kuvera whom he expelled. Described as Daśāsana,* “ten-faced,” he had twenty arms, and his physical appearance alone inspired intense terror. King of the class of frightful and malignant demons called Rākṣasas,* Rāvaṇa was the embodiment of all evil and wickedness. With his cannibal Rākṣasas, he attacked the Devas* and Dāityas* from whose loud wails and lamentations (*rāvayān āsa*) he is named. By his penance and devotion to Brahmā,* he was made invulnerable to demon or god and could assume any form he pleased; his doom lay in the hands of a woman. Viṣṇu became incarnate as Rāmacandra to destroy him. Rāvaṇa disguised in the form of a pious mendicant visited Rāma's dwelling in the forest while the latter was out to hunt and abducted Sītā* carrying her off to Laṅkā. The Rāmāyaṇa describes the war Rāma waged against Rāvaṇa at Laṅkā to rescue Sītā.



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Rohiṭa: Son of King Hariścandra*.

Sahadeva: Son of Mādri, mythical son of Aśvin, second wife of King Pāṇḍu, youngest of the five Pāṇḍava brothers, twin of Nakula* who was an accomplished swordsman and skilled in astronomy. Sahadeva was also considered to be the ideal in masculine beauty.

Sahasrārjuna: “thousand-armed Arjuna”. Real name and epithet of the Kṣatriya king of Haihayas, best known by his patronymic Kārtavīrya. Winning a boon through his worship of the saint Dattātreyā, he acquired 1000 arms, the power to rule through justice and sovereignty over the seven continents of the world. Extolled for his sacrifices, liberal ways, austerities, courtesy and self-restraint, his righteous rule of 85,000 years had an unfortunate ending. For, it was he who abducted the sage Jamadagni’s wife Renukā and stole the latter’s sacred cow Kāmadhenu for which he was mercilessly slaughtered by Paraśurāma,* Viṣṇu’s sixth *avatāra*.

Sītā: Daughter of King Janaka of Videha and wife of Rāmacandra.* Embodiment of purity, steadfastness and fidelity, Sītā accompanied Rāma in his exile and quietly endured with him the harshness of life in the forest. The demon Rāvaṇa, who was impassioned by Sītā, kidnapped her to his palace in Laṅka where he made many attempts to ravish her and convince her to marry him, but she stood firm against all persuasion, enticements and threats. When Rāma destroyed Rāvaṇa and rescued Sītā, however, he received her coldly, doubting her honour and chastity. Though she proved her purity by the ordeal of fire, which she endured unscathed, Rāma remained unconvinced of her innocence. Encouraged by the criticism of his subjects for retaining her as Queen when he became King of Ayodhyā, he banished her to the hermitage of the sage Vālmiki where she bore his twin sons. Many years later, Rāma recalled Sītā, repenting his distrust of her innocence, but she invoked the mother earth to attest her purity which it did by drawing her back into itself.

Śaṅkha: Name of an Asura* who conquered the gods, stole the Vedas and carried them off to the bottom of the sea from where they were rescued by Viṣṇu in his *avatāra* as Matsya*.



Śārngadhārī: “bow-wielder”. Epithet of Viṣṇu.

Siddha: Semi-divine beings of great purity said to be 88,000 in number who dwell in the region between the earth and the sun.

Sura: God, deity; also called *deva* —the shining ones, and *amara* —the immortal. The Suras dwell high above the earth in *svarga*, Indra’s heaven. They descend on to Mt. Meru which is their pleasure ground and meeting place. The summit of Mt. Meru is resplendent as the morning sun and is the favourite spot of the Apsaras, Devas, Asuras and the heavenly musicians, the Kinnaras and Ghandharvas.

Tārāmātī/Tārā: Wife of King Hariścandra.*

Uparājana: Rāvaṇa’s* deputy.

Vāmana: The fifth incarnation of Viṣṇu as the dwarf son of the brahmin couple Kaśyapa and Aditi who humbled the demon king Bali.* Bali had acquired dominion over the three worlds by his devotions and patience. However, he abused this power by troubling both men and gods who entreated Viṣṇu to come to their aid and restore their dignity. As small-framed Vāmana, Viṣṇu begged Bali for a mere three steps of land. Bali granted his wish. Assuming his true form, Viṣṇu strode over heaven and earth in two steps, placing the third on Bali’s head who sank into the infernal regions where he was allowed to reign.

Varāha: “boar”. Viṣṇu’s fourth incarnation as the Boar. To recover the earth, which the demon Hiranyakaśipu had dragged to the bottom of the sea, Viṣṇu was incarnated as the Boar. After a contest that lasted a thousand years, he finally overcame the demon and raised up the earth again.

Vāsuki: King of serpents (Nāgas*) in the underworld whom the gods used as a rope which they twisted around Mt. Mandara to churn the ocean and obtain *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality. Also called Śeṣa, the serpent-king has a thousand heads and serves as Viṣṇu’s couch and canopy when the latter sleeps during the intervals of creation. As symbol of eternity, another one of his names is Ananta, “the endless.”



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Vibhiṣaṇa: “terrible”. Rāvaṇa’s younger brother who like his brother, worshipped Brahmā and obtained a boon that he should never commit an unworthy act even when under great distress. He was opposed to the ways of the Rākṣasas and tried to convince Rāvaṇa not to wage war with Rāma. Furious, Rāvaṇa persecuted him. Vibhiṣaṇa joined forces with Rāma and after Rāvaṇa’s defeat, Rāma raised him to the throne of Laṅka and he was given the boon of immortality.

Viṣṇu: Preserver, second god of the Hindu triad, Viṣṇu occupies a predominant place in the Hindu pantheon. To his worshippers, he is the Supreme Being from which all creation emanates. He is frequently referred to as Nārāyaṇa, the all-pervading, and Hari, the resplendent. As preserver and restorer, later tradition assigned to him the function of redeemer, and he is best known and worshipped through his saviour forms or *avatāras*. Amongst them, the most widely known and accepted are his *dasāvatāra* or ten incarnations: Matsya,* Kūrma,* Varāha,* Narasiṃha,* Vāmana,* Paraśurāma,* Rāma,* Kṛṣṇa,* Buddha,* and Kalki.* His celestial dwelling is the heavenly city of Vaikuṇṭha where he resides with his consort Lakṣmī or Śrī, Goddess of Wealth. He wields a bow called Śārṅga.*

Yama: “restrainer”. Ruler and judge of the dead, god of the dead with whom the spirits of the departed reside. Held by some to be the progenitor of the human race and thus the first man to die, Yama conducts the dead to the realm of the ancestors (*pitṛs*). He seizes his victims by his noose and punishes them with his mace.

Yakṣa: Although frequently mentioned with the Rākṣasas, the Yakṣas are a different class of Asuras who seceded from the former with Kubera as their King. Unlike the Rākṣasas of Rāvaṇa, these demons are inoffensive and benign, and their principal role is to protect Kubera, God of Wealth, whose heaven is on Mt. Meru.

Yudhiṣṭhira: Eldest of the Pāṇḍava brothers, mythical son of Dharma, god of Justice. Praised for his calm, fair and dispassionate judgment, he was renowned as a just ruler but known to be inept at war and politics. Thus, when



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his wicked cousin Duryodhana challenged him to a game of dice, Yudhiṣṭhira, foolishly expecting fair play, lost everything including his kingdom, wealth, brothers and wife, all of whom were reduced with him to the status of slaves and sent into exile for thirteen years.



2. HISTORICAL FIGURES

Adam: father of humanity (*abu'l-bashar*); primordial man, first human created by Allah. In the Qurʾān, after Allah had created the heavens and the earth, He decided to create man and place him on earth as his *khalifa* or deputy. He taught Adam the names of all things (II:28-32) which even the angels knew not and then commanded the angels to bow before him. All prostrated before Adam save Iblis, who unlike Adam, was created from fire not clay (II:33; VII:12f; XV:26-36). Iblis or Satan was expelled from the Garden. God then asked who would bear His trust (*amānah*), and all in His creation shied away whereas Adam accepted the burden. When Adam repented after he was banished to earth for eating of the forbidden fruit, God promised him His guidance (III:36-37; VII:24-26) and reminded Adam of the covenant he had forgotten (XX:115) not to serve Satan (XXXVI:60). In Ṣūfism and Shīʿism, Adam is *al-insān al-kāmil* — the perfect man in whom Muḥammad's Light (*nūr*) is manifest, hence, the first of the prophets sent to mankind.

ʿAlī: ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, d. 661 C.E., cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muḥammad; fourth Caliph in Sunni Islam; after Khadīja, the first male to accept the Prophet's message and mission; facilitated Muḥammad's escape from Mecca to Medina. According to Shīʿites, ʿAlī is *walī Allah*—friend of Allah, who after the Prophet inherited both the spiritual and the political leadership (*imāmah*) of the Muslim community. ʿAlī married the Prophet's daughter Fāṭimah who bore him two sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn; the five constitute the *ahl al-bayt*, lit. family of the [prophet's] house, to whose lineage belong the authority of *imāmah*.

Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zakariyya: d. 1227 C.E., a saint of the Suhrawardī order who was born near Multān in 1182-83 C.E. On the order of his mentor, Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī of Baghdad, Bahāʾ al-Dīn founded the Suhrawardī order in India. He set up a *kḥanaqāh* in Multān which became a famous centre of mystical discipline in Medieval India. The order flourished in Sind and Punjab. Zakariyya lived in an aristocratic manner and kept close contact with the ruling class; he rejected itinerant and ascetic mystics such as the Qalandars and did not approve of severe fasts and other austere practices; nor did he approve of the



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religious use of music, *samāʿ*, as a means to mystical experience. He played a key role in helping Iltūtmish gain control over Multān in 1210-1235 C.E. The *gināns* preserve a story about the confrontation between Pīr Shams and Bahāʾ al-Dīn.

Duldul: Name of the Prophet's white horse that he rode on his campaigns; she survived him and according to Shīʿah tradition, ʿAlī inherited her and rode her in the Battles of the Camel and Siffin.

Gorakh: Gorakhnāth c. 1120 C.E., founder of the order of the Kānpḥaṭa Yogis in northern India, named thus because the ears of disciples were split to insert enormous earrings during their initiation ceremony (*kān-phḥaṭa* lit. means split eared). A vast legendary folklore surrounds the figure of Gorakhnāth and his followers who were notorious for their utter disregard of custom and their perverse rites and practices. Poetry attributed to Gorakh survives in Panjabi; his followers have composed several writings on magic and alchemy.

Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn: Ismāʿīlī Pīr, son of Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, born in Ucch c. 1329 C.E. and died c. 1470 C.E. His shrine lies outside Ucch and is locally known as Ḥasan Daryā. Credited with the conversion of many Hindus to Satpanth Ismāʿilism; also appears to have had ties with the Suhrawardī order.

Ḥusayn: Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad, son of Fāṭimah and ʿAlī who came to a tragic end at Karbalāʾ in 680 C.E. After ʿAlī's rival Muʿāwiyah died, the Kūfans—many of whom had Shīʿite sympathies—invited Ḥusayn to their town. Led to Kūfa by false assurances of his popularity there, when he approached Kūfa he was met instead by enemies. Refusing to fight, he encamped at a place nearby called Karbalāʾ, but an army from Kūfa under ʿUmar b. Saʿd surrounded him and eventually massacred Ḥusayn and his small circle of supporters.

Islām Shāh: 30th Ismāʿīlī Nizārī Imām d. 1423 C.E. His name is associated in the *gināns* with the three Ismāʿīlī Pīrs: Pīr Shams, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn and Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn. The surname Islām Shāh may have been used to identify either of



the two Imāms, Islām Shāh or Muḥammad b. Islām Shāh, who lived in Anjudān in the 15th century.

Ḳhalīl Allah: Ḳhalīl Allah ʿAlī I, 39th Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imām d. 1585 C.E.; Ḳhalīl Allah ʿAlī II, 45th Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imām d. 1817 C.E. The latter Imām was assassinated by members of the Qājār court in Yazd. Fearing this would create trouble, the Shāh of Iran granted his son and successor, Imām Ḥasan ʿAlī Shāh, the districts of Qumm and Mahallāt as well as conferred on him the title of Āghā Khān. However, since Ḥasan ʿAlī Shāh continued to receive hostile treatment from certain court members, he migrated in 1848 C.E. to India where he settled in Bombay.

Mahdī: al-Mahdī ʿUbayd Allah c. 874- 934 C.E. was the first of the open or manifest (*ẓāhir*) Ismāʿīlī *imāms*. He was declared the first caliph of the Fāṭimid dynasty in Egypt in 910 C.E., twelve years after he became the eleventh Ismāʿīlī Imām. Under him, the *daʿwah* or religious mission of the Ismāʿīlīs emerged from its period of secrecy (*ṣatr*) and flourished in the Maghrib and the East. While al-Mahdī was not particularly successful in his ambition to conquer North Africa, he laid firm political foundations for over a century of Fāṭimid rule. Mahdī also means “the rightly guided one,” the title of the expected messiah who will restore justice and religion before the world ends. From the Ar. *h-d-y* meaning divine guidance, the Mahdī is he who will return Islām to its original perfection and bring an end to all oppression. In the Shīʿite tradition, the Mahdī must be from among the *ahl al-bayt*.

Nizār: 19th Ismāʿīlī Imām who died in 1095 C.E. The previous Imām Mustanṣir biʾllāh had two sons, Nizār and Mustaʿli. The Fāṭimid line split when, following Mustanṣir’s death, the elder son and designated heir Nizār was hailed Imām in Iran and Syria, whereas in Egypt, Yemen and Sind, his younger brother al-Mustaʿli succeeded in claiming this position with the help of his military commander, al-Afdal. The focal point of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs henceforth centred around the fortress of Alamūt in the Rūdbār district of the Alburz mountain ranges in the northern frontiers of modern Iran just south of the Caspian Sea. This fortress was captured by Ḥasan-i-Ṣabbāḥ in 1090 C.E. a few years before the Nizārī-Mustaʿlian schism took place. Note also that Nizār was



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the name of the 33rd Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imām who died in 1628 C.E. and whose tomb resides in Kahak.

Qāsim Shāh: Qāsim ʿAlī Shāh d. c. 1369, 29th Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Imām, grandson of Imām Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh who in 1256 C.E. had to surrender the Ismāʿīlī fortress of Alamūt to the ruthless Mongol, Hülagü Khān and witness the mass destruction and massacre of his followers and other Ismāʿīlī strongholds. Moving Westward, Qāsim Shāh settled in Ādharbayjān. By the 16th century, later Imāms had proceeded from there to Farāhan, Mahallāt and finally Anjudān, where under the Shīʿite dynasty of the Safavids, they experienced more tolerable conditions.

Şadr al-Dīn: c. 1350-1420 C.E., the third major Ismāʿīlī Pīr after Satgur Nūr and Pīr Shams who is credited with the consolidation of Satpanth Ismāʿīlism in the Indian subcontinent. Traditional sources attribute the establishment of Ismāʿīlī places of prayer (*jamāʿat khānah*) to Pīr Şadr al-Dīn and suggest that he named his Hindu converts *khwājah*—lords; the name stuck to the community who became commonly known as the Khojahs.



3. LOCAL CHARACTERS

Note: Characters appearing in the *ginān* narratives have not been listed below in alphabetical order. Rather, they are presented in sets as the *dramatis personae* of a particular story or of linked incidents and episodes. I have titled these stories for ease of reference. The stories are given in the sequence that they appear in the translations. Details of identity, role and attributes of specific characters have been drawn from the various *gināns* in which they appear. Together, these details give a fuller portrayal of each character. While individuals in the *ginān* narratives for whom there is no historical evidence have been styled here as “local,” it is possible that these characters were, in fact, historical persons. This question, however, may never be resolved, since apart from the *gināns*, all traces of them have been lost.

THE STORY OF KING MANAŚUDDHA

Manasudha Rājā; Radīyā (devī) Rāṇī: King Manasudha (lit. pure of mind); king of Prempāṭan (lit. city of love) whose wife is Queen Radīyāde (lit. *hṛdaya+devī* goddess of the heart) [9:1; 28:1]; the rule of their kingdom is entrusted to five ministers [9:2; 28:2]; they are pious devotees of Pir Shams [28:6]; they have a child [9:5; 28:77]; they are summoned by the Guru [9:4; 28:75] and undergo a trial at the end of which they attain the vision of Śyāma [9:11; 28:90] and Immortality [9:12; 28:91].

THE STORY OF QUEEN SURJĀ(DEVĪ)

Surjā; Ajīyā; Vajīyā; Kamalā; Dhamalā; Robaḍa; Locana: Circle of eight followers in the city of Cīnab [15:5] led by Queen Surjā who beseeched Surbhāṇ for religious knowledge and enlightenment [10:8-11].

Kamalā: Queen Surjā's son [16:5] who becomes immortal after hearing the Guru [16:12]; name of King Manasudha's attendant [28:26]; Viṣṇu as Vāmana saved the sacred cow called Kāmadhenu [28:58]; name of wife of a demon slain by Paraśurām (*kamalā*: lotus; name of Lakṣmī and typical name of women).

Surjā (devī) Rāṇī: Queen Surjā, wife of the tenth demon king of Cīnab [8:29]; a servant (*dāsi*) of the Sāheb to whom his disciple Surbhāṇ was sent [10:1];



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mistress of a demon [10:4]; she has a pious gathering of eight [15:5] all who desire religious knowledge and salvation [10:8] including her son Kamalā [16:5]; her demon husband is king of Yodhā [39:13] and is called focused [39:14]; she warns him that Yodhā will meet its end at the hands of 'Alī's army [41:20] and counsels him to flee [47:1]; he criticizes her for extolling another in his own city of Cīnab [47:10]; she is a devotee of the Guru whom she recollects and serves [55-1]; she dutifully practices divine recollection and drinks holy water [65:7].

THE STORY OF EMNĀBĀI

Nānābāi: Emnābāi's spiteful Hindu sister-in-law who discloses the latter's secret service of the Guru thus causing Emnābāi's expulsion from her in-laws' home [14:14-16].

Hemābāi: Nānābāi's mother, Emnābāi's mother-in-law, Śyāmdās's wife [14:19]; condemns Emnābāi and advises her husband to banish her and send her back to her father's home [14:21].

Śyāmdās: Hemābāi's husband and Emnābāi's father-in-law [14:19].

Harīścandra: Hemābāi's son: either Emnābāi's brother-in-law or husband [45:10].

Kulicanda: Possibly name of Emnābāi's husband over whom she triumphs by attaining heaven [45:16].

Huramala and Kuramala: Emnābāi's two children who are expelled with their mother from their grandparent's house [45:11].

Emnābāi: A secret follower of Pīr Shams who lives with her Hindu in-laws in the town of Ghazni [14:4]; her father lives in Godi Viloḍ [14:15]; she invites him to her place [14:5; 45:1-2]; a *satī*, she passes a test to prove her steadfast faith [14:7-13; 45:3]; she begs her sister-in-law not to disclose her secret [14:17; 45:7]; she endures humiliation at the hands of her in-laws and townsfolk for serving him [14:22] but escapes her persecutors when a palanquin specially sent for her transports her to heaven [14:24]; she is expelled with her two children



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by Hariścandra [45:10-11]; but she is miraculously able to feed her hungry and thirsty children popped corn and water [45:13-14].

THE STORY OF GODI VILOḢ

Devcand; Devrām; Saṅgī: Hindu pilgrims who stop to wash at the outskirts of town Godi ViloḢ (where Emnābār's father lives [67:2]); Sangī is from the Banyā caste (*vaiśya* or merchant class), Devrām is a brahmin and Devcand is from the Golarāṇā caste (*śūdra* or untouchable class). Devrām, the brahmin, causes a ruckus when drops of water accidentally splash on him [62:4] and challenges Pīr Shams to produce water from the Ganges to purify him of this defilement caused by his two disciples [68:1]; eventually, all three beg the Pīr for forgiveness [68:5-7].

THE STORY OF BANGLĀDEŚĀ

Vasto: Name of the *mukhī* or chief of a following in Bengal or Bangladesh appointed by Pīr Shams [72:5-6]; Vasto was to oversee religious ceremonies and collect the tithe [72:10].

THE STORY OF BHOṬNAGAR

Śivbhaṭ: An ascetic living just outside the town of Bhoṭnagar to whom the disciples of Pīr Shams go for help in getting food [75:11]; he informs the King of Bhoṭnagar of the injustice done to the Pīr [76:3], and acts as the King's messenger. Declaring himself the Pīr's follower, he begs the latter to open up the city gates [76: 16]; later, he goes to King Devsangī's treasury; he also preaches the new religion to his circle [77:33].

Rugī RaṇachoḢ & Trikam: Two residents of Bhoṭnagar from the Banyā caste who pledge themselves to the Pīr and ask him to forgive them [77:22-23]; possibly the very characters who first cast the Pīr out of the town.

Rāmsaṅgī or Devsaṅgī; Śīlvantī Sadā: King of Bhoṭnagar who was upset about the infraction against the Pīr by his subjects [75:9] and asks for an inquiry



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to seek out the offenders [76:6-7]; of the Gaekwād caste [77:33]; he goes before the Pīr after city gates open when the latter's name was invoked and begs him to visit his palace [77:4-5]; the Pīr declines but performs a miracle and the King is told to make sure that all residents of Bhoṭnagar drink milk from a cow that descended from heaven [77:11]; the King and his Queen, Śīlvantī Sadā, entreat the Pīr to visit their palace and to save them [77:18].

THE STORY OF NAVRĀTRĪ

Śaṅkar: A brahmin *paṇḍit* who in rejection of the Guru's teaching quit the *garbī* dance [100:3], for he was inferior in understanding and merit [10:5].

THE DISCIPLES OF PĪR SHAMS

Candrabhāṇ: A disciple (*celā*) of Pīr Shams and brother of Surbhāṇ [2:1]; one of the two youths who visits Emnābāī [14:9]; the child of Brahma (i.e. Pīr Shams) [14:10] who pleads for Emnābāī's release [14:23].

Surbhāṇ: A disciple (*celā*) of Pīr Shams and brother of Candrabhāṇ [2:1]; sent to visit Queen Surjā at Cīnab [10:1]; a messenger of the Guru's *gināns* who teaches her the principles of religion [10:4]; one of the two youths who visits Emnābāī [14:11].

Vimras: Most likely another name of the disciple Candrabhāṇ; the names of the two "brothers", namely, Vimras and Surbhāṇ, appear together consistently after Ginān # 10.

Vimras and Surbhāṇ: They impart religious knowledge to Queen Surjā [10:4,12]; the names of the two youths who accompany Pīr Shams to Ghazni to visit Emnābāī [14:4; 15:1; 15:14], to Banglādeśa [72:2], to Godi Viloḍ [67:3], and to Bhoṭnagar [74:8]. Vimras is Hari's devotee and recites *gināns* in honor of the Guru [14:3]; a model of self-sacrifice, he cut off his head and submitted it to the Guru [46:4]; though unrecognised, both Vimras and Surbhāṇ are present with the gods at the *ghaṭ* ceremony [53:5; 65:9]. Since time immemorial, they have been servants (*dāsa*) of Pīr Shams and they will become manifest in Kalyug



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[54:5; 62:11]; they are devotees (*bhakta*) of Guru Shams of Multān [64:3; 77:28]; to join their company is to attain release [65:13]; they are two Muslim devotees (*bhakta*) [67:4; 68:11; 75:1] (Surbhāṇ calls himself a Hindu once [76:2]) who are the disciples (*dāsa*) of Pīr Shams [67:10; 71:12; 73:2; 77:40]; Pīr Shams declares they will transmit the teachings of the True Path (*satpanth*) [68:11]; they impart religious knowledge through *gināns* and give instructions on how to perform rituals [69:2,4; 70:12; 72:8]; they perform the *ghaṭ* ceremony and collect the tithe (*dasond*) [71:4] and they tie the bracelet of allegiance on new devotees [73:1]; the two disciples went in search of help when their Guru was denied passage in Godi Viloḍ [75:1]; Vinras fetched a cup and milked the cow that descended from heaven [77:10].

OBSCURE CHARACTERS:

Ansūyā: Another name of Sitā whose piety and devotion won her the vision of Devadutta (Indra) [60:11].

Makaḍa Bhudara: Character who challenged Pīr Shams to reveal the *avatāra* of whom he spoke [17:7].



4. EPITHETS & TITLES

Alakha: Skt. *alakṣaṇa*. Without attribute; epithet for the Supreme who is beyond the particularity of attributes and whose nature cannot be summed up by a specific quality.

Brahman: Skt. The Impersonal, All-Pervading, Eternal, Self-existing Being from which all existence has sprung; the essential Cosmic Principle of the universe.

Coṭa: Hin./Guj. Famous, well-known; certain, sure; aim, blow.

Daryā: Per./Hin. Ocean, sea; *daryā-dil* —ocean-hearted, bountiful as the sea, generous.

Dātār: Hin./Guj. Generous, kind, forgiving; *dhātār* (Skt. *dhātṛ*—creator, supporter) Creator, Preserver, Sustainer.

Dāyam: Per. *dā'im*. Permanent, Eternal, Perpetual.

Ḡhāzī: Per./Guj. One who participates in a raid (Ar. *ghazwa*) against infidels; title of honor for one who fought or died for his religion; muslim crusader; common title of Muslim princes; itinerant soldier of fortune.

Guru: Skt./Hin. lit. dispeller of darkness; religious guide, master, teacher who initiates disciples in the spiritual quest; possessor of the esoteric secrets of truth and self-realisation, traditionally, the spiritual preceptor receives pupils at his hermitage teaching them as if they were his own sons while they serve him in total obedience and submission; the living guru is often regarded as the embodiment of deity whose spiritual lineage traces back to the *ādiguru*, the founding guru of a religious group.

Hari: Hin./Guj. lit. red, pale, yellow; lord, god, deity; applied to fire (*Agni*) , sun (*Viṣṇu*) and lightening (*Indra*) in Vedic usage, the epithet *hari* is frequently used for Viṣṇu.



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Hazrat: Ar. *ḥaḍrat*. Presence, majesty, dominion; epithet joined to the name of a venerated saint, scholar, religious figure; title of address for royalty and great persons, such as His Majesty, Lordship, Highness.

Imām: Ar. lit. leader of prayer; in Shīʿism, successor designated by the Prophet to assume leadership of the Muslim community after him; possessor of the esoteric meaning (*bāṭin*) of the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) form of the Divine Revelation brought by Muḥammad, hence, its legitimate interpreter; revealer of esoteric truths, spiritual rebirth must be sought through recognition of his divine essence or light (*nūr*).

Kirtār: Hin. Creator, Maker, Originator.

Khāliq: Per. Creator, God; *ḵhalq*—created things, creatures.

Khudāvand: Per. *ḵhudā*—God, Master, Owner; *ḵhudāvand*—title of address: Lord, King, Prince, Sir, Your Majesty.

Murshid al-Kāmil: Per. lit. the Perfect Master; *al-insān al-kāmil*—the Perfect Man, the archetype of humanity whose spiritual and physical potential is perfected or realised; in Islamic mysticism, he is mirror of all the Names of God, manifesting all divine attributes; through God's light (*nūr*) which shines in him, the believer's heart finds perfection.

Nara: Guj. man, husband, master, person.

Nārāyaṇa: Skt. lit. he whose place of motion is the waters; epithet of Viṣṇu; the Supreme Being, God, Creator.

Nirañjana: Skt. Faultless, without blemish, spotless; the Supreme Being, God.

Nirguṇa: Skt. Without qualities or attributes; epithet of God, Brahman.

Panj tan pāk: Per. lit. the five holy ones, namely, Prophet Muḥammad, his daughter Fāṭimah, his nephew and son-in-law ʿAlī, and his two grandsons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.



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Pir: Per. lit. aged, old; Şufî master, spiritual guide, Muslim teacher, also called *murshid* who is qualified to lead disciples along mystical path.

Qā'im: Per. Upright, firm, just; resolute, steadfast, perpetual; also al-Qā'im is the "riser"; the eschatological messiah or Mahdî.

Qalandar: Per. Wandering Muslim darwish or mystic who has relinquished his family and possessions and set out in search of spiritual enlightenment; represents the antinomian *şūfî* who defies conventional piety.

Sāheb Rājā: Per. *şāhib* —lit. possessor of; king, master, lord; honorific for sir, lord; also friend, companion; Gñj. *rājā* —king, ruler.

Sarjaṇahār: Hin. Creator, Maker, God.

Satgur: Hin. *sadguru* —the worthy preceptor, the True Guru.

Shāh: Per. king, sovereign, prince of noble lineage, excellent in any degree; Lord, King, Ruler.

Śrī: Skt. Honorific sir, lord, majest, blessed or auspicious one; prefixed to name of great men, gods, sacred or celebrated works.

Swāmī Rājā: Hin. lit. Master-King; lord and spiritual guide, spiritual master.



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